

Mr. Henderson in the Character of Falstaff.



Well, my fair princeps, see thy wandering knight.
Act III Sc 8

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ALSTAFF'S WEDDING.

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C O M E D Y.

As it is Acted at the

T H E A T R E S - R O Y A L

I N

Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.

Written by W. KENRICK, LL. D.

In magnis voluisse fat est.



L O N D O N ;

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M DCC LXXXI.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. Dodd in the Character of Mercury.
Mercury descends from the Clouds, flying across the Stage: re-enters, followed by a Servant, carrying a Counsellor's Gown and Wig.

A LA Mercure, equipp'd from top to toe,
My godship's name and quality you know.
Commission'd from Apollo, I come down
To attend this bench of justices, the town;
Assembled here, all members of the quorum:
To lay a matter of complaint before 'em.

The errand's not in character, 'tis true;
But what our betters bid us, we must do.
Therefore, I appear with decency at session,
I've stole, you see, the garb of the profession.

This gown and band belong to Serjeant Prig—
And this—our brother Puzzle's learned wig.—
[Putting on the gown, &c.]

Dress makes the man, Sirs, vestis virum facit—
So—now to business—Hem!—si vestris placet—
May't please your worships—Forgery, which is grown
To such a height as ne'er before was known—

I say a forgery hath been committed,
By which King Pluto's myrmidons, outwitted,
Certain choice spirits, in theatrick shape,
Have suffer'd from Elysium to escape;
Of Shakespear's offspring an ideal train,
Sprung, Pallas like, from an immortal brain!
Their names—I have 'em down—but to be brief,
Shall only just enumerate the chief.

Imprimis, with Madeira swell'd, and sack,
I here's Sir John Falstaff, alias call'd Plump Jack;
Next, Captain Pistol, a notorious bully;
And Miss Dol Tearsheet, fam'd for jilting cully;
The Widow Quickly, vintner, bawd and whore.
With Bardolph, Peto, Nym, and—several more;
Link'd in a gang, each cut-purse with his crony,
All arrant thieves and Dramatis Personæ;
Bent, as suppos'd, to prostitute to shame
Th' aforesaid Shakespear's honour, name and fame.

I shall not trespass on your worships time,
To explain at full the nature of this crime;
But, poets having an exclusive right
To bring their mental progeny to light,
This right's invaded by the party peac'd;
Who, vi et armis, hath th' old bard o'er-reach'd;
By counterfeiting of his hand, do you see,
Feliciously to set these vagrants free;
With base design I adopt them for his own,
Tho' Shakespear's property, and his alone.
Such is the fact.—A critick were an ass,
No doubt, to let such imposition pass;
Nor could a cheat so palpable succeed,
But that the captain of the guard con'dn't read—
Not he, for laughing, tho' to've saw'd his soul;
The scene and circumstances were so droll.

Pistol, with yellow night-cap patch'd with red,
With Mother Quickly was retir'd to bed;
And, waking, swore, by Styx, he would not come,
Sans preparation, pike and beat of drum.

Of aqua-vitæ hawing stole a flaggon,
Bardolph and Nym were playing at snap-dragon;
Sometimes proceeding from bard words to blows,
As by mistake Nym seiz'd on Bardolph's nose.

With Falstaff sat Dol Tearsheet, cheek by joll,
And while she busi'd his chin and scratch'd his gall,
Slipp'd from his thumb his grandfire's copper ring,
For love, not for the value, of the thing;
Then stole his empty purse; but no abuse;
'Twas only done to keep her hand in use:
He swearing, be'd be damn'd as soon as trust his
Round belly more with Hal, or his chief justice.

But this is wandering from the point.—They're be
And on your summons ready to appear:
Please to proceed then to examination;
And be attentive to their information.
If, as your judgment cannot be erroneous,
You take this forgery to be felonious,
The author meaning fraud, I need not mention
Your issuing warrants for his apprehension;
And when you've caught and into pieces torn him,
Hang up his mangled carcase in terrorem;
In flagrant crimes the process should be short;
The law is clear—I leave it with the court.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF.
JUSTICE SHALLOW.
MASTER SLENDER.
MR. PLEADWELL.
DR. CAIUS.
PRIAR LAWRENCE:
ANCIENT PISTOL.
BARDOLPH.
CORPORAL NYM.
GADSHILL.
OFFICER.
FRANCIS.
PETO, and Attendants,

W O M E N.

DAME URSULA, afterwards Lady Falstaff.
BRIDGET, her Chambermaid.
MRS. QUICKLY.
DOL TEARSHEET.

FALSTAFF'S WEDDING.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Street in Westminster,
the Day of the Coronation of King Henry the Fifth.*
Enter Sir John Falstaff solus.

WHAT a scurvy quarter is this! Not a bush, or a blind Cupid in the neighbourhood! 'Sblood! my legs will fail me ere I reach a tavern. Phoo—Phoo—It is some comfort, however, I escap'd with my life. The green-apron'd rascals, crowding after the procession, had well nigh made an end of me.

SCENE II.

Enter Bardolph.

Bar. O, Sir John, I'm glad I have found ye. I was in the fearfullest quandary for you in the world. I hope your honour has got no hurt.

Fal. Not it's death-wound, I hope; tho' Hal, indeed, look'd somewhat cold upon me.

Bar. Cold, Sir John! I am afraid we shall be in limbo shortly: for my lord chief justice—

Fal. Hold thy ill-omen'd croaking. If faithful services are thus requited, I will turn cordwainer; yea, cobbler, and heel-piece old shoes, ere I have to do with blood-royal again. Ingratitude! I hate it.

Bar. To be sure, Sir John, what you say is right; but, as the song says, ingratitude is worse than the sin of witchcraft. But I hope your honour got no personable harm in the mob: you were carried off the terrace, for all the world like a dunghill from Mill-bank by a spring-tide.

Fal. Bardolph, away with thy filthy comparisons! I am ill at ease, and more dispos'd to spleen than merriment. I pry'thee, look out, and see if there be a bawdy-house at hand.

Bar. What here, so near the court, Sir John?

Fal. Where better? 'Sblood! dost think there are no whores at court? Are there no dames of honour? Dost think Hal hath banish'd them too? Look out, look out.

Bar. I will, Sir John. *[Exit Bardolph.]*

SCENE III.

Fal. *[Solus.]* I would I were in Eastcheap. Mine hostess hath a most excellent cordial; and I never stood in more need of it than now. The gross indignity Hal hath put on me, sticks in my throat, and in the end, may go near to choke me. I shall never gulp it down; that's flat: unless, indeed, a full cup of sherris help to clear the way. And then how I shall stomach it; how I shall digest it, Heaven knows! At present, both my person and knight-ship are in jeopardy; my lord chief justice, to whose care I am commended, holding me not altogether in good liking. But no matter—if I am to be provided for, what avails it, who is my caterer? I could wish, nevertheless, old white-wine stood higher in his lordship's favour; that I may not be slighted at table, or in my by-drinkings. I like not such splenetick temperaments; such phlegmatick

constitutions; grey beards, that never make allowances for the continual waste of radical moisture.—'Sblood! I am as foundered and as sore as a blind horse in a mill.—Bardolph! where a plague art thou gotten to, caterwauling?

SCENE IV.

Enter Mrs. Quickly and Dol Tearsheet.

Quick. O, Sir John Falstaff!

Dol. O, sweet Sir John!

Fal. How! mine hostess, and my good vestal Mrs. Tearsheet! fave ye, gentlewomen both, good morrow.

Hest. Godild ye, Sir John—well I vow and protest an I didn't say he would take as civil notice of his old acquaintance: nay, tho' he was created by my lord-mayor of London.

Dol. What talk ye of lord-mayors and stuffy citizens, gossip Quickly? Sir John is a courtier, and to be sure we must gratulate him now as one of the greatest knights in the nation.—O sweet Sir John!

Fal. Truce with your formalities, Mrs. Dorothy. Pray have you seen none of our followers by the way? Pistol, nor Peto!

Quick. No verily, Sir John, not one.—We have seen nothing of any of them to day. They are all gone to the coronation, I warrant; and indeed we should have been there too, hadn't it been for that wicked villain, Constable Fang, that, by a mistake of the beadle of our ward, would have carried us to Bridewell this morning.

Fal. How! mine hostess and my fair Dorothy to Bridewell!

Quick. Even to Bridewell, I can assure ye.

Fal. But how; how! dame Quickly to Bridewell! a decent church-going widow and a modest maiden, I should say, single gentlewoman; to a house of correction! why, what—

Quick. So I said, Sir John. Nuthook, Nuthook, says I, do you know what you do? says I.—Have me to Bridewell, says I.—I say to Bridewell, indeed! a reputable house-keeper, that has paid scot and lot, and borne the burden of half the parish any time these twenty years.

Fal. That thou hast, hostess; of the male half. I'll be sworn for thee.

Quick. Besides, says I, do you know Sir John Falstaff! says I. Touch a hair of Mrs. Dorothy's head, says I, and Sir John will make you smart for it, says I, every bone in your skin; says I.

Fal. And what said the rascal to that?

Quick. Said, Sir John! he stood mumchance, and spoke never a living syllable, but set his vinegar-visag'd catchpoles upon us; who fastened their claws into Mrs. Tearsheet's best kirtle, and tore it into as many rents and tatters, as there were in the old tapestry hangings I pawn'd to fit your honour out for the last expedition.

Fal. Pshaw!

Dol. Yes indeed, Sir John, made a mere tatter—

FALSTAFF'S WEDDING.

demallion of me. But we did so tongue the leather-ear'd vultures.—

Fal. That they were glad to lose their gripe to get rid of you, I suppose.

Quick. Nay, Sir John, I was obliged to perduce an angel to convince them we were not the parties indicted.

Fal. Infidel rogues! would nothing less than the testimony of an angel convince them?

Quick. Aye, I knew how Sir John would take it. O, how soundly will the knave constable be swung'd for this! a Jack-in-office rascal! we shall cure the blue-skin'd rannion of his itch for whipping, I warrant ye.

SCENE V.

Re-enter Bardolph.

Bar. I have been looking all about, Sir John, but I cannot find one.

Quick. What is it Sir John wants, Mr. Bardolph?

Bar. A bawdy-house, mistress.

Quick. O Jesu-Maria! Miss. Dorothy.

Fal. How, sirrah! what call'st thou a bawdy-house! I sent thee to look out for a house of civil entertainment, where I might repose myself after my fatigue! Why, what, you rogue, would you make of me?

Quick. Marry come up indeed! a bawdy-house truly! but as to a house of civil entertainment, Sir John; here is one hard by, where the knights and lords, and all the great gentlemen of the court are entertained, both by night and by day, as civilly as at their own homes; and by gentlewomen as kind to them, I warrant ye, as their own ladies themselves. A house of civil entertainment a bawdy-house! why I keep a house of civility myself, and I would have you to know, Mr. Bardolph—

Bar. Nay, nay, 'tis all one: what Sir John pleases.

Quick. Yes, by my truly, and so I think it ought, for if Sir John recommends you to the king—

Dol. Nay, were I Sir John, I'm sure I would never promote such a clown as Bardolph at court.

Bar. Ah! Dol, Dol, I am afraid our promotion will be at the gallows. If Sir John has any interest with the hangman, he may get me prefer'd, perhaps, to the top of the ladder.

Dol. Why, how now, varlet?

Quick. Do you hear? do you hear, sweet Sir John?

Fal. Aye, hostess, Bardolph is somewhat blunt: but as for the king—

Quick. Heavens bless him! a sweet young prince he was; and to be sure a gracious king he is. But what of him, Sir John?

Fal. Why, marry, hang him, hostess—Treason must out, as well as murder.

Quick. I am amaz'd, Sir John; why how is this? what a goodness! when—when—

Dol. How is this, good Bardolph?

Fal. Why, I'll tell you how it is. That same ungrateful, sneaking, pitiful rascal, we are speaking of, is turn'd fanatick.

Quick. Fanatick! the king a fanatick!

Fal. Aye, fanatick. presbyter, bishop, if you will. Let his crown be his mitre, I care not.

Dol. We don't take your meaning, Sir John.

Fal. You must know then, Dol, that after having, in pure love and affection, ridden post day and night four-score and odd miles, to congratulate him on his accession, and condole with him on his father's death; instead of bidding me welcome to court, he preached me my own funeral sermon.

Quick. A funeral sermon!

Fal. Aye, hostess: for at the end of his discourse he ordered me to be buried alive, at ten miles distance from the court. And, to make this unnatural interment the surer, he has appointed me lord chief justice his undertaker, to see to the disposal of my corpse.

Quick. Buried alive, quoth he! what, what in all this?

Fal. In plain terms, Dame Quickly, your gracious king hath banish'd me the presence; and till he grows a graceless prince again, I am forbidden to approach his person within ten miles, on penalty of being hang'd. Take ye me now?

Quick. O Jesu! is it possible?

Dol. Ah, ha! is it so? fits the wind in the quarter?

Quick. Well, as I am an honest woman, who would have thought it? it is a world to see!

Dol. And so Sir John is in disgrace; still plain Jack Falstaff, and one of us! Ha! ha! ha! poor blown Jack.

Quick. A sad disappointment, indeed, Sir John, but in good faith, things fall out so odd, and the world goes so wrong, and the times are so hard—that here, there, why, no longer ago than yesterday, was I obliged to pay the Lord knows what away for one thing or other; and then my misfortune to day; an angel to the constables; and besides, this comes the day after to-morrow, when I must make up a sum for the wine-merchant;—wherefore if your honour would but discharge your score in East-cheap; because, as why, your honour knows—

Fal. How's this, Dame Quickly?

Quick. Because I say as why, your honour knows seventy odd pound is a great deal of money for poor widow-woman to lose.

Fal. What talk you of losing, hostess!

Quick. True, Sir John, as you say, to be sure I shall not be willing to lose it: for the law is open and I know which way to get my money.

Fal. I am glad thou dost, hostess: as in that case I need not give myself the trouble to pay thee. The law is open, say'st thou? Aye, like a mouse-trap on the catch for nibbling clients. Enter thy action and I will hold thee a gallon of sack, thy departed husband will get out of purgatory ere thou out of the hands of thy lawyer.

Quick. Nay, Sir John, you need not twit me upon that. You need not sting my poor husband's soul into my teeth. He has not been gone so long though for the matter of that he might have been in heaven before now, hadn't I lent you the money. Mr. Dumb should have had to say masses for him. Yes, Sir John, you have put into that great belly of yours what should have got my poor husband out of purgatory, and now you reproach me for it. Has he been still alive you would not have us'd his discourse to console widow thus. You wouldn't, Sir John.

Fal. No, I'll be sworn I should not.

Quick. Well then, Sir John, out of charity, if it were nothing else, you ought to repay the money. Nay, if you don't, I'll pray night and day that you may be haunted by his ghost. Heav'n rest his soul! I would he might never sleep quietly in his grave till he has made you pay me.

Fal. Go to, thou art a foolish woman; with good words thou may'st be paid.

Quick. No, Sir John, good words won't do. I must have money, Sir John. The priests won't get a soul out of purgatory without money. Be-

my, Sir John, good words are no payment; I can
nobody to take them: good words will not do
me.

Fal. Well, well, I say you may be paid——
Quick. May! Sir John, I must. You have thus
me off and on me, a good while; but I must,
must be paid, I must——

Fal. Heigh! heigh! wilt thou raise the neigh-
bourhood upon us? If thou art clamorous, I will
see thee duck'd in the Thames, for a bawd.——
What a plague, art thou drunk? On the honour of
a knight thou shalt be paid. Dost thou doubt
my honour?

Quick. Why, Sir John, to be sure, nobody would
dare to confide in your honour's honour: but
you know, Sir John, (nobody better) what
honour is. It will buy neither coals nor candles;
it will my landl'd take it for rent, nor the mer-
chant for sack or sherry. But would you give me
half the money, and leave the rest to honour;
that a body might keep open house, Sir John,
it would be doing something.

Fal. Nay, if thou wilt be advis'd, I will do more
for thee. Bardolph! forget not to go (when I send
thee) to the cashier, with whom I left a thousand
pounds this morning, and tell him to satisfy Mrs.
Quickly forthwith.

Quick. A thousand pound!

Fal. The times are not so bad, hostess (thanks
to my friend Shallow) but we may yet have a merry
time in Eastcheap.——How says my Dol?

Dol. Nay, you know, sweet Jack, I was always
your pleasure here.

Quick. That I will say for her, and a sweeter-na-
med better hearted creature never lay by the side of
a man. But goodwife's heart! why do we tarry
here, when Sir John complain'd of his being fa-
tigu'd, and was looking for a house of civil enter-
tainment; I will shew you the way incontinently,
John.

Fal. I thank thee, hostess; I am now somewhat
tired, and will endeavour to reach Eastcheap.
Get a cup of sack, by the way, I think, would
be am'iss. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VI. Tavern in Eastcheap.

Enter Pistol and Nym.

Pis. Hang Pistol up with line of hempen string,
that he in rabbit-hutch be close immur'd.——
Nym. The stiff cramp upon the fangs of justice.

Nym. Marry-trap, we shew'd his myrmidons a
pair of heels though. I wonder what is become
of Sir John. They have certainly nail'd his fat
rump. We must not venture to the Fleet to see.
They'll nab us there: and for the matter of that, I
suppose, they'll be running the humour upon us
at the top. I will incontinently go and shut my-
self up. The storm may blow over when we are
all uninvincible.

Pis. Pistol disdains to skulk. *Nolens* 'tis fate:
who would *volens* be incarcerated?

Nym. we must eat, and money have we none.
True, *nolens volens*, as you say, we must eat.
We'll starve, like a rat, behind the arras, as lit-
tle as another man. But what shall we do if Sir
John be in limbo.

Pis. Or in or out; his follower I no more,
his mother is Necessity;
Pistol's carmen is an imp of wit,
his suggestions, and Pallas doth approve.
The great Ponjardo del Stiletto's dead,
the master of the art of self-defence.

Broken foils, his daggers, belts and blades;
in trade, I'll purchase upon tick;

My face, disguis'd with an usurped beard,
These jutting eye-brows turn'd from black to red,
Shall screen from knowledge. Thou shalt too assume
A borrow'd extrement, and partner be
In stock and block: since fighting's grown a trade,
Pence are pick'd up by masters of the blade.

Nym. The thought is lucky. Angels will ensue.
But must we not transmutify our names?

Pis. My brain's my godfather, and, at the font,
Me Don Anticho del Pistolo call'd.

Nym. And pray what did this same godfather
call me?

Pis. Signior Nymwego!

Nym. Good! Signior Nymwego! and you Don
Anticho del Pistolo? I will hold them in oblivion.
The trick of it pleases. But here comes Quickly
and Dol.

SCENE VII.

Enter Quickly and Dol Tearsheet.

Quick. So, gentlemen! you are got home before
Sir John I see.

Pis. How rares the knight? Is he in durance vile?

Quick. No, by my truly; he returns forthwith;
but in a woeful plight. Francis! What Francis!
bring the great chair for Sir John.

Francis. [Within.] Anon, anon, Sir.

Dol. [To Nym.] Sirrah, Nym, hath Falstaff got
money by him?

Nym. Yes, a thousand pound; he borrowed it
of Justice Shallow: but we shall be little the better
for that; for the knight will certainly be in limbo.

Dol. May be, no; and may be, yes. It is no
matter. [Dol and Quickly confer apart.]

Nym. [To Pistol, who stands musing.] Does the
humour hold? Or shall we wait the coming of the
knight?

Pis. And share his fate in base incarceration!
Shall Don Anticho del Pistolo prove
A vile hunt-counter? No——we'll thrive alone.
Hostess farewell; we may return—or not.

Nym. Bye, Dol. [Exeunt Pistol and Nym.]

SCENE VIII.

Quick. 'Tis certainly so; Sir John hath got the
money.

Dol. I know not that; but if he has, he'll prob-
ably carry it to jail with him. Here comes Bar-
dolph; ask him.

SCENE IX.

Enter Bardolph.

Quick. Is Sir John at hand, Bardolph?

Bar. He will be here incontinently, hostess; I
only slept before, to let you know he was a coming.

Quick. But is it veritably true, Bardolph, that
Sir John has got a thousand pound by him?

Dol. Aye, is that true, Bardolph?

Bar. True, upon honour; he had it of Justice
Shallow, of Gloucestershire; and it lies now in
master Jinge-cash, the banker's hands. But Sir
John will be here momentarily. Is ev'ry thing
ready?

Quick. In a minute we are all clear. Run, good
Dol, and receive the knight at the door. Francis!
what Francis!

Francis. [Without.] Anon, anon, Sir.

Quick. Light up candles in the passage. A bot-
tle of theriac, Francis, quick, you sleeping knave.
Always upon a snail's gallop! O that ever woman
should be plagu'd with such creeping varlets!

Dol. O, here is Sir John, himself.

SCENE X.

Enter Sir John Falstaff.

Quick. Jaded to death, I warrant! An easy chair,
good Bardolph. Please to depose yourself, Sir John.

Fal. Soh! now have I taken up my sitting again, in my old quarters. A glass of sherris, Francis!

Dol. And how do you find yourself, my sweet knight?

Fal. Tolerably thirsty. [*Drinks.*] I can drink; and that is all the bodily functions I am capable of. I am as stiff, ev'ry part about me, as a walking taylor, or Don Diego on a sign-post.

Dol. Nay, Sir John, if that be the case, it is not over with you yet. Give me a buss.

Fal. Go, Dol, you are riggish—get you gone you water-wagtail, you; I am not merrily dispos'd.

Dol. But, will you give me a new kirtle at Bartholemew-fair?

Fal. I will, Dol.—Nay, I cannot bear you on my knee.

Dol. Why, how came you so terribly maul'd, my leman?

Fal. Did not I tell ye?

Quick. No indeed, Sir John, your honour spoke of fatigue; but did not descend to particles.

Fal. Well then I will tell ye now. Give me first a glass of sherris. [*Drinks.*] You must know that after the king (hang him for a sheep-stealing cur) gave me that rebuff I told you of; he stalk'd majestically away, and left me to the mercy of the multitude: when, as I stood parleying with mine ancient, mine arms a-kembo thus, a knot of elbowing carls bore me down before them, with the impetuosity of a torrent. Lo! there was I, jamm'd fast in the midst of a vile group of mechanicks, as if we had grown together in a body corporate: and in this jeopardy was I carried along; sometimes bolstered up on all sides, at the confluence of several turnings, like a May-pole; and at others, wire-drawn between two stone walls, as if they meant to make chitterlings of me: now, this fair round belly taking the form of a christmas-pye, and by and by press'd as flat as a pancake. It is a miracle I did not burst in the midst of them. Had it not been for the sufficiency of my buff doublet, I should have certainly burst.

Dol. If you had, Sir John, you would have went off with a report like a bladder.

Fal. A bladder, ye jade, a demi-culverin at least. I should have died an hero: my exit would have made some noise in the world.

Quick. Heav'n forbid, Sir John, you should ever die a virulent death, I say.

Dol. I hope, indeed, sweet knight, you will never be press'd to death. That must be an odd end, and yet methinks I could bear much.

Fal. I'll be sworn thou could'st, Dol: for thou art a woman, and made to bear.

Quick. Yes, in good sooth, poor woman is made to bear ev'ry thing. She must suffer all a man's ill-humours; let 'em lie never so heavy upon her: and, by my truly, some men are nothing else. But to be sure, Sir John, you was most inhumanly used. Would nobody take pity upon you?

Fal. Pity! the most remorseless rascals! they made no more of me than if I had been a lump of dough, they were kneading to make dumplings of: and to expostulate with the villains would have been preaching to the winds.

Dol. Why did not you exert your courage, Sir John? draw upon them?

Fal. Draw, sayst thou? I could not come at my rapier to be master of a kingdom. And as for good words; in return for the few I gave them, they let fly their jests so thick at me, and pepper'd me so plausibly with small wit, that I was dumb-founded.

Dol. I thought you could never have been overmatch'd that way Sir John.

Fal. Yet so it was, Dol. They were holid wits, and came laden with choke-pears: but, indeed, I was overpower'd by numbers. Two to one, Doll, you know—They pelted me from quarters. Will you hear? I will give you a spice of their sarcasms; a sample of the jibing pellets they threw at me. As I was thus stemming the tide and crying out for the Lord's sake, a dried eel's of a fishmonger ask'd me how I could complain the croud. "Is a porpoise ill at ease," said "amidst a glut of sprats and herrings?" I had time to answer the smelt, before a barber-furze the very model of the skeleton in his glass-case, offer'd to tap me for the dropsey; and to make us all elbow room by letting out a puncheon of canary, at girdle. "Right," cries a third, at the word can "I'll be hang'd if any thing be in the double "that fat rogue but a hog's-skin of Spanish wine and incontinently they roar'd out, on all sides "Tap him, there—tap him master surgeon. 'Sblood I was forc'd to draw in my horns, and silent; lest the villains being thirsty, should find the shaver to operation. The knave, indeed, five weavers off, and so could not well come at me I might otherwise have been drank up alive.

Dol. And pray how cam'st thou off at last, John?

Fal. By mere Providence: for, after the barous rascals had squeez'd the breath out of my body they buffetted me because I could not roar out, I save the king. At length, I know not how, I threw me down in the cloisters, where, fall crosswise, and the way being narrow, I fairly block'd up the passage: upon which, (for they could not straddle over me) they took another way (a plague go with them!) for fear of losing the shew. Thus was I left to take in wind, and gather myself up at leisure.

Dol. And did the mangy villains so play upon sackbut? a parcel of sapless twigs! dry elms, fit for fuel! I would I had the burning of them.

Fal. Would'st thou fire them, Doll? Hal! thou touch-wood still, Doll?

Dol. Nay, Sir John, not so.

Quick. No, I'll be sworn, Sir John, to my natural knowledge, if there be truth or faith in my conscience. But Sir John, what would your honour please to have for supper?

Fal. Another glass of sherris—fill me out, dolph. I cannot eat. I have lost my appetite the way. Put an egg into a quart of mulled wine and give it me when I am a-bed. I will to bed.

Dol. Would you have your bed prepar'd, Sir John?

Fal. Aye, on the instant, good Dol. Hal! go thou and see to the brewage of my sack.

[*Exeunt Dol and Mrs. Quickly.*]

SCENE XI. Tavern continued.

[*Enter Pistol and Nym.*]

Pis. Sir Knight, I bring thee news: loud reports

My lord chief justice hath recall'd his warrants ere he had issued them. But I thank thee for tidings. The sergeants will not disturb my rest least to-night. But what comes here?

Pis. From ducking-pond escaped in drizzle. The crooked-finger'd cut-purse, Peto bight.

SCENE XII.

[*Enter Peto, leaning upon Gadshill.*]

Fal. What's the matter, Peto?

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Gad. Matter! Sir Knight, and master of mine! Matter! I faith enough. The mob at Westminster like to have murder'd poor Peto here.

Fal. And how for?

Gad. Why, Sir John, as he was getting upon a miler's bulk, to see what was become of your honour, a raw-bon'd swaggering serjeant coming by caught hold of him by the leg, and threw him on the people's heads! where they shoulder'd him out from post to pillar, as they would have done a hedge-hog, or a dead rabbit that had been thrown among them. I faith, I thought they would have kill'd him.

Fal. How! was that Peto? I saw the bustle at distance, but took it for a huge boar-cat the porters and prentices had got, to make sport withal. By Lord, Peto, I have a fellow-feeling for thy sufferings.

Pif. And I. But say, is merit thus repaid?

Fal. All fortune play the jilt with men of mould?

Pif. Peto, lay thy head in Parco's lap.

Fal. Good Peto, let me advise thee to go to bed, lay thy head on a pillow. Bardolph, see to

Pif. Pitol and Nym, good night.

Pif. and Nym. Good night, Sir John.

Fal. Francis!

Fal. Let me to bed—let Doll bring up the sack.

Fal. To the jorden, and tuck up my back. [*Exit.*]

Pif. Signior Nymwego! hear'st thoulad of craft?

Nym. Yea, marry, Don Anticho del Pistolo—the humour well?

Pif. Well, Nym; and thou and I o'er cup and can,

Nym. go, and schemes of operation plan.

knave should feast his enormous guts at any free-cost of mine.—I will to my counsel immediately; and if the law will not avail me, my sword shall do me justice.

Slan. You know best, cousin Shallow, to be sure, but—

Sbal. But me no buts, I say, but come along?

Your cousin Shallow puts up no such wrong.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. A Street.

Enter an Officer of the King's Household and a Friar.

Offi. There, good Filar, thou hast it: it would little conduce to raise the king's wisdom in the general estimation of the world, to have it thought in the power of such unworthy men as Falstaff and his fellows, to lead him implicitly into all those extravagances under which the character of his youth suffer'd: and yet so it would go near to be suspected, if his highness should now act towards them with an ill-timed severity. My lord chief justice hath therefore retracted his hasty orders for their imprisonment.

Fri. Son, well observed; and I commend his lordship's prudence, in treating their vices as infirmities; and will readily undertake to commune with them on the grievous enormity of their dissolute lives.

Offi. His lordship would have you apply first to Sir John Falstaff, the ring-leader of this vicious troop. If you can dispose him to good, the rest may follow.

Fri. I will attend these reprobates, and use the means.

Offi. His lordship requires that you would bring Falstaff over to retire to a monastery, if possible; that being concealed from the eyes of the world, he may not daily remind it of what has past. Farewel, good father; I will see thee again at the Priory.

[*Exit Officer.*]

SCENE III. Street continued.

Fri. [*Solus.*] I will go; but I fear my mission will prove as fruitless as that of many other apotties, sent among infidels. As there is no danger of martyrdom, however, I am content.—Persuade Sir John Falstaff to turn monk! could I work miracles, indeed, and, like St. Thomas, turn an Ethiop white, something might be said for it: but, as it is, I despair of converting an old deothee from two such prevailing heresies as the whore and the bottle.

SCENE IV. Tavern in Eastcheap.

Enter Falstaff and Bardolph.

Fal. Two sound naps, of eight hours a-piece, have something recruited me. Bardolph, my morning's whet. Is it prepar'd?

Bar. 'Tis here, Sir John. [*Gives Falstaff a tankard.*]

Fal. Here's to our better fortune. [*Drinks.*]

Bar. Ah, Sir John, I am afraid our fortune hath been at it's highest flood. We have teen our best days.

Fal. So the world goes, Bardolph. Up and down. But is it not hard now? I that have—but that's nothing. I hate boasting. It is, however, well known what pains I have taken to make a man of that Hal. Nay, you yourself are privy to many the good offices I have done him. Before the younger knew me, he could not drink sack; made conscience of going to church on holidays; and blush'd like a scarlet cloak, at entering a bawdy-house. I instructed him in all the manly exercises. I was content to win his money, to teach him gaming: to get drunk myself to try to make him so. Nay, setting rotten limbs and dignity aside,

A C T II.

SCENE I. A Street.

Enter Justice Shallow and Master Slender.

J. Shal. Wonder now, coz; when you know what a desperate kind of a horrible man Sir John you should—

M. Slend. Tut, tut—I fear him not; there's a Sir John Falstaff in the nation shall overcome me.

J. Shal. But what's done can't be help'd, coz; he reach'd you now, as I take it, when you lent the money.

M. Slend. Well, cousin of mine; then it is my turn to over-reach him, and get it again.

J. Shal. That, indeed, cousin Shallow, to be sure, is quite right; tit for tat, as we say in the country! but then he is such a bloody-minded fellow; you know he broke my head once for nothing at all: and if he should get an inkling that we are going to law with him, O Lord, O Lord! we shall never sleep in quiet again.

M. Slend. Poh, you chit, if he breaks the peace, I know what to do with him, I warrant ye.

J. Shal. Ay, there indeed, cousin, ecod, I did not think of that. If I am in fear of my life, I can overtake him up with a warrant, and binding him over to his good behaviour. Suppose, therefore, we swear the peace against him first, and lay the law by the heels before we enter the action.—Yet, I don't know, if I might advise you, I wash my hands of him.

M. Slend. Talk not to me. I tell thee I will spend my estate, ere the rascally knight shall carry off. I had rather the inns of court should share money among them, than that the gorballed

have I not even pimp'd for the bashful rogue? Such a Prince of Wales! by my troth, I was aham'd of him. Had it not been for me, the milk-sop might have been crown'd before he had lost his maiden-head.

Bar. And that would have been a pity, Sir John, to be sure.

Fal. It was I first taught him to way-lay the true-man; for I knew him when he durst not cry stand to a turkey-cock; nay, a gander, of the ordinary size of a green-goose, had it met him on a common, would have made him run for it. I went farther yet; and not only embolden'd his actions, but taught him the manly arts of conversation. In the style military, for instance, or swearing.

Bar. Sir John, I believe, there you forget yourself; the prince wanted no assistance of you in that; for when he was a little crack, he would swear ye like a man six foot high.

Fal. Right, Bardolph, you are right. I remember me; swearing indeed he knew: for tho' but a king's son, he would, as thou say'st, rap up an oath like an emperor. But then for the quintessence of elocution, the hyperbole, vulgarly called lying; there I am a master. Yet what a deal of pains it hath cost me to teach Hal to lye; and all thrown away upon him. He would never do it roundly. He had no genius that way.

Bar. You know, Sir John, the prince never could away with lying. He us'd to say 'twas beneath a gentleman and a soldier.

Fal. Well, well, he will never shine in the recital of his own exploits as Xenophon, Cæsar, and I have done.

Bar. Why, Sir John, to be sure, you have done something.

Fal. Something! the services I have done him and his father are out of number. Methinks my behaviour, in that ever memorable action at Shrewsbury, should make him blush at his ingratitude. Who kill'd Hotspur? Did not I give him his death's wound in the thigh? Was it not I who took prisoner that fiery dragon Coleville? and that even alive! And am I thus requited? Is this the guerdon of my great achievements? Hang valour, I'll hack my sword no more. Thus has it ever been the fate of merit to be rewarded. Alcibiades and Bellifarius for that!

Bar. Ay, Sir John, they were tall fellows: they were sadly used indeed; I have heard of them. But that was in King John's time, I think.

Fal. They were the Falstuffs of antiquity, Bardolph.

Bar. Like enough, Sir John: they were before my time, to be sure; though Pistol told me, t'other day, that General Bellifarius was his godfather.

Fal. Pistol is an ignorant braggard; an ass: I have injur'd my dignity by associating with rascals, not worthy to wait at my heels. What tell'st thou me of Pistol?

Bar. Nay, Sir John, I meant no harm. I do think you deserve to be made a lord of indeed.

Fal. I expected nothing less, I can assure ye. And then, for my well known œconomy, to have had the sole management of the exchequer at least.

Bar. And instead of that to be banish'd—

Fal. I know not if I heard the word banish. I was forbidden indeed to come near the king's person by ten miles; but I was not at that distance when those injunctions were laid on me. Quere now (it might pose a casuist, let me tell ye) whether I am thereby injoin'd to march right out, ten miles an end; whether the negative not come, amounts

to the positive, go.—I will not understand so; and, if that be my lord chief justice's construction, by the Lord, I will put him to the trouble of carrying me! I will be laid up with the ghere I budge a foot.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, the king did say, banish.

Fal. Admit it: unless he means to reside ever in a place, and be in his own proper person immovable as a church, I hold my life on a damnable precarious tenure. He must give me timely notice of his motions, that I may regulate mine accordingly; otherwise, if he be travelling my way, we may happen to encounter, and I get myself hang'd to the inadvertency. I do not think it safe, therefore, to stir out of town, without more explicit orders. Give me another draught.

Bar. The tankard is out, Sir John. Shall I replenish?

Fal. No. I'll toward St. Paul's: a gentle persubulation this morning may refresh me.

SCENE V. A Street.

Enter Justice Shallow, Master Slender and a Lawyer.

Shal. Well, Master Pleadwell, are you still of that opinion. If so, my money's gone.

Law. Indeed, I am still of that opinion, Justice Shallow.

Shal. What! how! that my money's gone?

Law. Nay, I know not that. I say, I am of opinion you should have taken a bond, or obligation at the time of lending it, friend Shallow. A thousand pound on the bare word of a courtier; and a courtier Sir John Falstaff! ne'er an alderman the city of London would have lent a thousand pence on such security.

Slén. Oh, that ever a country squire should be less wit than a city alderman!

Law. A thousand pound Mr. Shallow, is—

Shal. A thousand pound. I know it is, Master Pleadwell, I know it well. But pray now, is there no method in the law to recover it? He has not have spent it yet: cannot we compel him to restitution? Arrest him—arrest him, Mr. Pleadwell.

Law. But should he deny the debt, how will you prove it? and who knows on such an emergency what Sir John Falstaff will not do?

Shal. Nay he will lye; that's the truth on't.

Slén. Aye, coz, and that most consumedly too.

Shal. I can prove his receipt of the money.

Law. But the conditions, Justice Shallow. What have you to shew that he is engag'd to turn it? and when?

Shal. Nothing: I was weak enough to let him on his bare word.

Slén. Nay, cousin Shallow, not so neither. He be sworn he borrow'd it upon his oath. He is upon the honour of a true knight, to give him a thousand pound again; and besides that, his comings-in of a better thing, in his majesty's service at London.

Law. Ah, Master Slender, these knights have honour enough to swear by; but, for any thing else, I am apprehensive we shall find him of these honourable knights, whose word is as good as their oath. But see, if I mistake not, he comes; this encounter may perhaps save you trouble of attending him at home. Let us see him fair, and persuade him, if possible, to his obligation for the money. If we can do that, may trounce him. Let me alone with him.

Slén. O would you could Mr. Pleadwell! would I give methinks to see him well trounced if it was only for giving me once a bloody cock!

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SCENE VI. Street continued.

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. How, Master Shallow! consulting with his lawyer! are ye thereabouts, friend Shallow? wouldst thou hamper me with an action? [Aside.] I will let them by.

Shal. Sir John, Sir John, a word with you, if you please.

Fal. O my good friends Robert Shallow, Esq. Master Slender! how fare ye gentlemen both?

Law. Sir John, Mr. Shallow here has—

Fal. Ha! what mine old acquaintance Master Pleadwell! how is it with your health Master Pleadwell?

Law. Pleadwell is my name, Sir John.

Fal. Right—I cry you mercy—Roundabout with well, I think. My memory is not so retentive.

Law. No offence, Sir John, that is not the matter.

Fal. Marry but it is, Mr. Pleadwell; a treacherous memory is my great defect; and a misnomer in law I knowest—

Shal. Would be master of consequence, Sir John. That is not our business at present. Mr. Shallow hath put a case—

Fal. Aye, Master Shallow should know something of the law too. Was not he at Clement's inn when thou wert first enter'd there? That must be years ago, Mr. Pleadwell—Let me see. How many years ago must that be, Master Shallow?—

Shal. You carry your age well, Mr. Pleadwell.

Fal. Pretty well, pretty well, Sir John, but—

Shal. Nay marry, I say, very well, Master Shallow. And pray what is become of young Pleadwell, and Dick Silver-tongue, your fellow-students? they were called to the bar, I suppose. That was a prate-apace rogue, and a devil among men of robas. He and Master Shallow here were with the wenches. Ha, Master Shallow!

Fal. No matter, Sir John, at present we would not be on other business.

Shal. Nay, gentlemen, if you are upon business, give me your pardon, and leave ye. I am not used to impertinent.

Law. You are not going, Sir John; it is with your business lies.

Fal. Business with me!

Shal. Yes, about the thousand pound, Sir John.

Fal. What mean you, Master Shallow?

Shal. That you borrowed of me, Sir John.

Fal. Yes, Sir John, the thousand pound you lent of my cousin Shallow, Sir John.

Shal. Take me with ye gentlemen, both; let me understand ye. You presented me, indeed, with a thousand pound to promote your interest at court, Master Shallow; and may depend on it, if I can help you—

Fal. Fiddle, fiddle, Sir John; I expect my interest again: your interest at court is not worth anything.

Shal. I cannot help that; the more is my misfortune. Mr. Shallow; you see my heart is good.

Law. If so, Sir John, you will not refuse to give Master Shallow something to shew for his money, in your hand.

Shal. How dost thou know that, Mr. Pleadwell? I will consult my counsel in this case.

Law. There is no need, Sir John; I will draw a little instrument, to which thou wilt set thy hand immediately.

Fal. Not while I have a head, Master Pleadwell. I like not running hand over head in these matters. By latter Lammas, or St. Falstaff's day, I may perhaps bethink me.

Law. I know of no saint of thy family in the calendar, Sir John.

Fal. Well, well, there may be saint's of a worse. Our merit hath not stood in the way of promotion, that's all: and yet there are as many whore-masters there as lawyers, I believe. But I cannot tarry now to hold farther question with thee; fatigued as I am, and earnest to reach my lodgings yonder.

Law. If thou wilt there sign the instrument, Sir John, we will attend you thither.

Fal. Will thou? it is a notorious bawdy-house.

Law. No matter, Sir John.

Fal. No matter, say'st thou? Is it then no matter for one of the grave sages of the law to be seen in a publick bawdy-house? Lord, Lord, what will this world come to! My conscience, however, is more tender: I should be sorry to give such occasion of scandal.

Law. Please you, Sir John, to be serious. Let us rightly understand each other.

Fal. With all my heart, good Master Pleadwell; then, to be plain with you, I find you do not know me. You talk to me of restitution and conditions; did'st thou ever know Sir John Falstaff make restitution on any conditions? And dost thou think me so unpractis'd a courtier as to return the perquisites of my calling, because I am turn'd out; or to restore the purchase of my good-will, because I am not likely to get in. What take ye me for a youngster? a geck? Go to—you cannot play upon me.—Master Shallow, rest you content: your money is in good hands; and, if I do not spend it like a gentleman, never trust me with a thousand pound again.

Shal. Oh! that I ever did trust such a carriff!

Law. But, pray, were these the conditions, Mr. Shallow? Was you to be repaid by a place at court?

Shal. To be sure. Why what do you think, Mr. Pleadwell, cousin Shallow was fool enough to lend a thousand pound for nothing? Why, I, myself, was to be made a great man too; and that into the bargain.

Shal. Cousin Slender, speak in your turn, I pray you.

Law. Were these terms specified?

Fal. Not indeed on parchment, *signatum & sigillatum*, Mr. Pleadwell. A courtier's promise is not, indeed, very good in law. But I can tell ye the places I should have procur'd for these noblesquires: and by'r lady, thou wilt say they would have been well occupied. Having a little pique or so at my lord chief justice, and Mr. Shallow, here, thinking himself qualified, I promis'd him my interest for his worship's removal from the quorum to his lordship's place on the bench. Was it not so, Mr. Shallow?

Shal. Don't belye me, Sir John; don't cheat me of my money, and laugh at me too. Robert Shallow Esquire will not put up with that.

Fal. Then for Master Slender here, I purpos'd, far his address and elocution, to have got him appointed orator to the house of parliament; or otherwise, in consideration of his figure and magnanimity, to have made him a staff officer, or captain of horse, at the least.

Shal. Nay, Sir John, you did not tell me what; but I expected some notable place; I'll assure ye; for

B

I look upon myself, plain squire as I stand here, to be somebody.

Sbal. Coz, coz, you are an ass, coz.

Slen. Why, why, I didn't lend him the money; I.

Law. Justice Shallow, this is a very simple affair. I am sorry it is not in my power to serve you in it. Sir John, if you had either honour or honesty, you would restore the money; but, as you make pretensions to neither, I leave you. *[Exit Lawyer.]*

SCENE VII. *Street continued.*

Falstaff, Shallow, and Slender.

Fal. Well, my masters, you hear the counsel learned in the law. Will you to dinner with me? You shall see I am no niggard. If you will lodge with me in Eastcheap, you shall see the thousand pound fairly spent in sack: you shall share with me to the utmost farthing. But for dry restitution, I have not been accusom'd to it for many years. You would not have me a changeling at this time of day, I hope, Master Shallow.

Sbal. Changeling! no, Sir John, thou art no changeling; but, depend on it, I will not put up this wrong. Robert Shallow Esquire, will neither eat nor drink with thee. If the law will not help me, I will take other methods. I will have my money; depend on't, I will have my money. *[Exit Shallow.]*

Slen. Aye, aye, we shall find means to get the money, never fear. *[Exit Slender.]*

SCENE VIII. *Street continued.*

Falstaff solus.

Nay, I fear it not—at least before I shall have found means to spend it: and then, get it who may, it concerns not me. We shall see, however, whose business will be done first. Mine will go merrily forward. Ah! shallow Master Shallow! But who could have thought the snipe would have went to counsel, to get himself laugh'd at? Then to see how demurely Sir Slyboots angled for me, as if I had been a gudgeon! How cunningly the rascally barrador would have hook'd me on his instrument! But I was even with the methodical knave. My friend Shallow will never bring it to bear an action at law; and if he should, I am on the right side of the hedge. Indeed, were I to go to law for a mint of money, I would chuse to have it all in my possession. There is nothing like it. Possession is the very life's blood of a bad cause: on the strength of which in mine, I will home to dinner.

SCENE IX. *A Fencing School.*

Enter Pistol and Nym disguised.

Pist. Is this not better than the service mean Of Cappadocian or Assyrian knight? That last young quarreller, how much gave he?

Nym. Two marks for entrance, and an angel fee.

Pist. 'Tis well, keep 'count; and lend attention Dame Ursula, the knight's neglected flame, [mute. Grown rich, is fond of finery and name; To her bath Don Pistol made his suit By love-epistle.—Nym.—What say'st thou to't?

Nym. What, rival Sir John! 'Tis true he does not go there now, or he'd make a bloody business of it. You must know I've courted her niece and chambermaid Bridget ever since the last wind-fall.

Pist. And hast thou sped?

Nym. Very scurvily, Ancient. The jade runs her humours upon me.

Pist. Nym, I a letter for thee will indite, In the true style of a Castilian knight. Woman is taken by mere words and whim; Nymwogo shall command what's held from Nym. But see, new swaggerers coming—keep your state.

SCENE X.

Enter Justice Shallow and Master Slender.

Sbal. Aye, this is my old school: here have my fa! and my ha!—Odso, your servant, gen pray is Signior Stilletto to be spoken with?

Pist. The valiant wight translated is to heav

Sbal. Faith and troth, I'm sorry for that; tily sorry indeed.

Pist. Ha! sorry! sayst thou, Paphlagonian Wouldst thou in Tartarus that he should howl Ha!—Ha!

[Draws and makes a lunge at Shallow, retires.]

Sbal. Not I.—Not I.—Pray moderate passion.—Gad's mercy on me, what a f lunge!—Sir, understand me. Signior St was my honoured master; I had a friendship him.

Pist. I then embrace thee with a soldier's a Stiletto was the glory of the sword, The Ajax, Hector, Agamemnon, he!

Sbal. And, if I may ask without offence, Sir, what is the name and quality of your wor

Pist. I his successor am, and men me call Anticho del Pistolo.

Sbal. A name of sound, and smacking lo valour! it forts well with your figure and profes

Slen. Ecod I think so; his name and look sure make me tremble. I would I were safely of the house, la!

Pist. Needst thou my service?

Sbal. To say the truth, Sir, tho' I am not quarrelsome disposition, I have an affair of he upon my hands; and, having long laid by m pier, I came to take a lesson or two of Signior letto; the better to withstand the force of m verfary. Now, since my old master is dea would be obliged to the skill of his successor.

Pist. What is thy name and quality?

Sbal. My name is Shallow, Sir.

Slen. Of Gloucestershire, Esquire, justice e peace and of the quorum.

Pist. A name of note, and smacking mu folly.

It suiteth well thy figure and thy purpose. Nymwogo, hand the foils. There, grasp it w Bear thy point thus against thy rival's sword, And had he twenty lives, he falls. Sa—S

[They skirmish, and Shallow is displac'd.]

Sbal. Enough, enough, for once, brave Sir, en I see, indeed, your worship is a master.

Another time I'll try my skill again.

Pist. Enough's a feast. Farewel, till nee meet. *[Exit]*

SCENE XI.

Nym. And will not my young squire here into the humour of it. Come, Sir, lay hold.

Slen. Cod so, not I. I quarrel with nobo my man. And I can break his head at any tixpence. So I've no occasion, Sir, I thank y Come, Coz, let's go.

Sbal. Sir, there's my thanks; *[Grows m Nym.]* you'll see me soon again.

Slen. Yes, yes, my cousin will come again I've no occasion I thank ye.

[Exeunt Shallow and Slender.]

SCENE XII.

Nym solus.

These two squires are precious subjects to humours on.—I have it too: they've l beeves; and marry-trap, I will lay a trap fo trying them. Our hostess Quickly and Pol meet, when bedizen'd, may pass on the

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hire oafs for London dames of rank. Nay they resemble the wealthy widow of Watling-street, and buxom Beatrice of Bucklersbury, her forward piece. This were a trick of price: I'll fashion it, by working up these noodles into a conceit of their being beloved by the widow and Madam Beatrice. I will about it straight.

A C T. III.

SCENE I. Tavern in Eastcheap.

Enter Falstaff and Bardolph.

BARDOLPH H! How is it with Peto to-day!

Bar. Why, he's in a bad way, Sir John.

Fal. That all!—when was he otherwise? who ever knew Peto or thee in a good way?

Bar. And yet, Sir John, we are your followers, you know.

Fal. Well said; Bardolph.—I see thy wit is improved. I lead you the way, it is true; but you follow me, like spaniels, with damnable circumvolutions. But, whom have we here?

Bar. It is the doctor, Sir John; that has been up to see Peto.

Fal. O doctor Caius Mithridate, the apothecary! precious limb of Galen!—At Windfor he was a physician, and starved by prescribing poisons; but now he is turned apothecary, and thrives by administering them.

SCENE II.

Enter Dr. Caius.

Fal. So, Master Doctor, thou art a man of merit. —Thou art fought after.—Pray, how many patients may'st thou have dispatch'd to-day?

Caius. *Pas beaucoup*, Sir John—not great many. I pay visits betimes, *en bon matin*, a *Monsieur de la Cour*.—But I must go now *à l'instant*, *à la cour*.

Fal. Nay, rest you a moment, Dr. Caius; I would commune with you a little on the score of old acquaintance. Pray, Master Doctor, how came you to leave Windfor? You were, I thought, in some scrape there.

Caius. How came I to leave Windfor? By gar dat Windfor did leave me.—Repute! Morbleu, I was of the best reputation *du monde*. In three year, dare no less dan three hundred patients of quality under my hands.—They did never complain of mal-treatment: and yet I did stay dere till I had no patients left.

Fal. Dead men tell no tales, Doctor, 'tis certain.

Caius. *Eb, bien!* my patients did die sure enough; but dere was deir sons, deir daughters, deir cousin-germans; dey was alive, and commend my treatment of de defunct et non obstant they would never let me in demselves.

Fal. That's much.—But did all your patients die? Say you? Not one survive to trumpet the name of their doctor!

Caius. Yes, by gar, dere was one Bourgeois *fort riche et fort mal*, he bring me more disgrace than a dose dat was dead. I did exert all my skill for three year; and he would not be cured.

Fal. Then why did you not let him go after the first?

Caius. By gar he would not go. *Il a été fort en colère, cet homme là*. I have give him opiates, de decoctiques, stronger by gar dan Lethe itself. But he would not be compos'd; he would live to disgrace me. So he turn me off; and grow well himself, *bien sûr*, presently, without any medicine in the world.

Fal. A base Plebeian tyke!

Caius. By gar, he was one base fellow, let me tell you dat. De quality no put such affront upon practitioner *re nommé*, un *homme comme moi*.

Fal. Right, Master Caius; it is a damned thing when people will not die *secundum artem*; but live in spite of the doctor. But to the present-concern; how is it with Peto?

Caius. *Oh! j'espere qu'il seroit bientôt guéri*; he is in very fair way, Sir John.

Fal. Bardolph tells me here, he is in a bad one; fair and good; I have heard often; but fair and bad, seldom. But what are his complaints, Master Doctor? I know something of physick.

Caius. Vy, Sir John, de cutis of de occiput est laceré: there be gros tumours all over de corps, de body. De patient has a deliré, a vertigo; and besides, *de symptômes febriles*, de *pouls indicat phlebotomy*.

Fal. Phlebotomy! What bleeding?

Caius. A leetel; Sir John—ve vil take away but sixteen ounces, for un petit revulsion.

Fal. Sixteen ounces! Haft thou a design upon his life? What, a plague, would'st thou kill him? He doth not weigh four pounds avbirdupolze, flesh, bones, and all; and thou would'st take him away by quarterts, in a sloop-bafon.

Caius. Vat is dat, Sir John? will you instruct me in de patologie, de therapeutique, de indications et contra-indications? Monsieur Peto must be bled.

Fal. Bleed sick apes and hypp'd monkies. If Peto be not hang'd, he shall die a natural death. Thinkest thou I'll have his veins drain'd to fill a row of porringers in a barber's shop window! use bits of red cloth and be damn'd: ye shall have the blood of no follower of mine. Sixteen ounces! I tell thee, not Galen, Hippocrates, nor Esculapius himself, were they alive, should thus operate upon him. Phlebotomy! I will phlebotomize ye all with my rapier, by the Lord, if you offer to draw a lancet on him.

Caius. *Eb bien donc*, Sir John; be not in one passion; ve vill take little less; but by gar de patient vill die, if he no be bled. And let me tell you, Sir John, you would do vell to lose leetel blood. *En vérité vous êtes trop phlébotomique*.

Fal. Me! I thank thee. But, in the blood is the life of the creature; and I will not consent to part with mine.

Caius. *Il seroit mieux aussi*: it would be better, Sir John, you mix little more water in your wine.

Fal. More water! I mix none.

Caius. Vorfe and vorfe! By gar, Sir John, if you no change your regime, you shall die. Your fat vill eat you up.

Fal. I shall eat up many a fat capon first, Master Doctor.—But would'st thou persuade me, with thy contra-indications, that water is better than wine?

Caius. *Pour quelques tempérans et dans certains cas*; for some constitutions and in some cases, Sir John.

Fal. For thine, perhaps; but mine thanks thee, for thy water. Wine is good enough for me.

Caius. *Ab! qu'on dit des mal avisés*. *Eb, bien*, Sir John, you will no take my advice, I leave you. *Bon jour*—good day to you, Sir John.

[*Aside*] *Eb! mon dieu! si gras! si gros*, by gar he cannot live long; he will overlay his own belly and burst, if he be not bled: [*Exit Dr. Caius*].

SCENE III.

Fal. Good day to you, master doctor apothecay. And yet I know not whether I ought to wish that neither; for a good day to him must be a bad one.

to somebody. A man of any conscience, or humanity, knows not how to salute fellows of such an occupation: for who would wish the rest of mankind lame and blind, sick and sorry, to find them employment forsooth?—Poor Peto! I would not lose him, methinks; for though he be a worthless knave, he is an old acquaintance; and I never could find in my heart to part with my old acquaintance merely because they were good for nothing. King Hal is another sort of a man to what I am, to abandon his old friends in his prosperity thus. Poor Peto!

Bar. Ecod, Sir John, it happened lucky for me, I can tell ye, that I came off so well as I did yesterday.

Fal. Aye, by'r lady, thou play'dst fair to get off in a whole skin, and leave thy friend and master in extremity.

Bar. Nay, 'pon honour, Sir John, I did my utmost to keep up with you: but 'twas impossible; and indeed it was very fortunate that I was not trod to death by the populous.

Fal. Thou! tell me the moon is a Suffolk cheese, or a Windsor pear. Thou! have not I seen thee clear the ring without a staff, at a bear-baiting? Thou might'st make thy way through a legion, nay the millions of a crusade: why would come within a fathom of that firebrand, thy nose? It is a flaming two-edged sword. Would'st thou make me believe the villains would come near thee, to burn their holiday cloaths? Thou would'st have set them a blazing like stubble, and have consumed the whole procession of heralds, like men of straw. A plague upon them, it was by their avoiding thee, I suppose, that I had like to have died a martyr to compulency.

Bar. Sir John, you are always plaguing me about my face; what would you have me do with it?

Fal. Do with it? If there were water enough in the Thames, I would have thee quench it. But water, I fear, can do nothing for thee; since I remember, when we rode last from Canterbury, with the rain beating full in our faces, thou cam'st into the Borough with thy nose and cheeks glowing red hot, although they had been hissing all the way like a taylor's goose. God forgive me—but when thou runn'st behind the hedge, in fear of the officer; I could not help comparing him and thee to Moses and the burning-bush. But thou wilt in time be consumed: thy fire must out.

Bar. I would it were out, so I might hear no more on't. In troth, Sir John, if I must always be your butt, I shall seek another service, I assure you.

Fal. Nay, nay, good Bardolph, that must not be. I speak not in disparagement, Heaven knows: for I mean to cherish thee, against the sick of fuel, or the visitation of a Dutch winter.

Bar. 'Sblood! Sir John, I'll bear it no longer.

Fal. Hold, Bardolph, where art thou going? thou glow-worm in magnature with thy tail upwards; thou pumpkin-headed rascal, stay, or—

Bar. Give me good words then, Sir John; why pumpkin-head, pray now?

Fal. Hast thou never seen a scoop'd pumpkin set over a candle's end, on a gate post, to frighten alewives from gossiping by owl-light? That is a type of thee—that is thy emblem: thy head being hollow, full of light, and easily broken; as thou shalt experience, if thou offer'st to fly thy co-

lours till disbanded by authority. I shall heed thee I tell thee, to keep me warm under the coldest of the king's displeasure!

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, burnt sack and ginger will do you more good: for what'somever light I may give, I am sure, set aside cholera, I am as cold as ever a white-liver'd younker in town.

Fal. Cold, say'st thou! thy face would condemn thee for an incendiary before any bench of judicature in the kingdom! thou would'st carry apparent combustibles into court with thee. Tell me not of cold. Thou would'st certainly have been hang'd long ago, had not the sheriff been afraid thou would'st have fir'd the hangman or the gibbet.

Bar. Why, Sir John. I have been your attendant, off and on, these twenty years, come Candlemas; and I don't find I have had any such effect on you.

Fal. The cause, you rogue, the cause; am not oblig'd to keep a pipe of canary constantly discharging on me? Are not the tapsters perpetually employed? the sack-buckets for ever a going, to keep me from blazing? And yet at times my skin is shrivel'd up like an April-pippin. Mark me but walking a hundred paces, with thee glowing at my heels, if I do not broil and drip like a roasting ox.

Bar. Ah, you are pleased to be hard upon me, Sir John, but I am sure my face never hurt a hair of your head.

Fal. No! look at 'em—hath it not turn'd them all gray? Twenty years ago, before they were bleac'd by thy fire, my locks were of a nut brown.

Bar. Why, you grow old, Sir John.

Fal. Old! what call you old? I am a little more than threescore; and Methusalem liv'd to near a thousand. Why may not I be a patriarch, and beget sons and daughters these hundred years, myself?

Bar. Then you must get a wife, Sir John; for your common fields, you know, never bear clover.

Fal. Marry! what to be made a cuckold of, I warrant ye?

Bar. Why, Sir John, if you should marry, you would not like to be singular, I suppose.

Fal. Nay, for the matter of that, all's one; but who will have me? your dames of breeding are too fine and finicking for me to bear with them.

Bar. Aye, or for them to bear you either, Sir John.

Fal. Nay, whoever has me, she must be no tenderling; she must be none of your gingerbread lassies that will crumble to pieces in the towlsing. She must be none of your wishy-washy, panada gentlewomen; neither; your curd and whey gentlefolks, that cannot support the embraces of a soldier; I must have kicksey-wicksey of more substantial stuff.

Bar. Why, Sir John, what say you to Madam Ursula, your old sweetheart? You have doubtless owing to my knowledge these twenty years last past, I suppose you know her great aunt is dead, and she left her four hundred marks a year.

Fal. No, by the Lord, I heard nothing on't. She sent me a letter, indeed, into Gloucestershire: but I was over a bottle, and would not interrupt the glass to read it. I knew it was hers by the superscription; which by the way, however, was as unintelligible as the hand-writing on the wall. O had never reached me had not the bearer been a decipherer. Go, Bardolph, and fetch it; you will find it among other trumpery in my cloak-bag.

[Exit Bardolph]

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SCENE IV. *Tavern continued.*

Fal. [Solus.] Four hundred marks a year, quoth it were not an unreasonable competence were cherries comparatively so dear. But if the female incumbrance on it should turn out a shrew; Lord have mercy upon me! I shall be paid off the sins of my youth. Let me bethink me. — Four hundred marks a year! I have, it is true, all hopes from Hal; and shall grow old some time sadder. These aches in my limbs forebode it. I cannot hold out for ever, that's certain. Were it for good, therefore, to make a virtue of necessity, I will take up while I am in case to reap the credit of reformation? Could I reconcile it to my interest, I believe my inclination would follow.

SCENE V. *Tavern continued.*

Re-enter Bardolph.

Bar. There, Sir John, is the letter.
Fal. Come on; let us see, if we are master of so much Arabick as to find out her meaning. [*Reads.*] — hum — hum — hum! Why dame Ursula, thou art a memory. I could have credited thee for sublimity, on account of that old friend to woman, the repent; but how thou couldst remember for fifteen years together what money I owed thee — that need I cannot account for. I have myself forgot long since. She tells me here, I have borrowed three hundred pounds of her at times, as tokens of love. By the Lord, and as I am a soldier, I will love her still, and she shall command semblable proofs of it. [*Reads on.*] Hum — hum — hum! payment of the money or the performance of my engagements! How! am I then to be married on compulsion? That will go most damnably against the grain. But hold — if I marry, her money will be mine; if not, she may cease to lend when she pleases: the fortune of that man is always at the turn of the tide, who depends on the caprice of a woman.

Bar. Why marry her, then, Sir John. I dare say she has heard nothing of your disgrace at court; that she won't stand upon terms.

Fal. Marry, Bardolph, and I am half resolved to do so. Yea, by the Lord, and I will too. She has three thousand pounds in money; I will courageously make the attack and mount the breach of matrimony. If I fall into the hands of Philistines, good night. It is but going into purgatory a few years before my time. Bardolph, get me pen and ink, in the Cupid. Thou shalt be one of love's messengers. — I will write to her in trope and figure: metaphor and hyperbole carry all before them with women. Let her resist lyes and nonsense if she can. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

Enter Nym, Doll, and Quickly.

Doll. But do you think, Nym, they won't discover us?

Nym. Not if you mind the trick of it, and don't betray yourselves. The old squire is as rampant as a cat, and conceited as an ape. And as for the young one, he has but four senses out of the five. He has not your breath smell of aquavivæ, nor your smack of bawdry. Array yourselves antique, be modest and speak supernaculum. Do this, and they'll never suspect you.

Quickly. O, let me alone for speaking supernaculum; I have a set of the courtliest phrases in my wifery book! I'll con them by heart.

Nym. Well, go on, for Bardolph will be here pre-

Quickly. Fear not — we'll lose no time: come, Doll, we shall be made women, if this plot succeeds.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

Dame Ursula, and Bridget attending.

Urs. And do you think, Bridget, Sir John will be at last as good as his word, then? How sits my coif to day? I would thou hadst brought me one of those new-fashioned farthingals.

Brid. O, Madam, you are mighty fine, as it is, truly; and, I am sure, Sir John can do nothing less than admire you.

Urs. Thinkest thou so, Bridget? Why, to be certain, a peach-colour'd satin does become my complexion hugely. But I think the roses are faded in my cheeks. Well, no matter: he might have gather'd them twenty years ago, had not he been a rover. I hope, however, he has sold his wild oats, and that I shall yet have the satisfaction to be called my Lady Falstaff.

Brid. To be sure, Madam; and though Sir John is but a knight at present, he will be very assuredly, now the young king is crown'd, be made a great lord, and may be a duke. Indeed, Madam, I cannot think of less.

Urs. And then shall I be a dutchess, Bridget. Dame Ursula a dutchess!

Brid. Aye, Madam, that will be a day to see; if I am so happy as to be in your grace's favour.

Urs. For certain, Bridget, thou shalt. Well, this love is a strange thing! there is Sir John has deceiv'd me a thousand times, and yet, I know not how, he always persuaded me he was sincere.

Brid. A sure sign you lov'd him, Madam.

Urs. And yet to be sure, before I receiv'd his letter, I thought I never should hear from him again, and had almost come to a resolution to cast him entirely off.

Brid. In good sooth, Madam, that is very prudent; to cast off a lover when we find he will leave us.

Urs. I think so, and not a little imprudent to do it before, for one of my years at least.

Brid. Why, Madam, you are not so old.

Urs. Indeed, but I am — old enough to know I ought not to part with one lover till I am sure of another.

Brid. To be sure, Madam, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; but the sport of hampering the rogues, who are at liberty, is so vastly pretty.

Urs. Aye, if we were sure of catching them at last; but Bridget, Bridget, how often do they escape through our fingers and give us the slip! Besides, it is for younger lasses than I to go bird-catching — I cannot throw salt on the tail of a sparrow now.

Brid. Nay, say not so, Madam; you forget your new lover, Don Antiocho del Pistolo.

Urs. Hang him, fustian-pated rogue, whoever he be, to pester me with his epistles. — To write letters for his comrade to thee too! well, as I live, I will expose this pair of bombards to Sir John. I will shew him their letters.

Brid. Madam, the knight is coming.

Urs. Bless us, Bridget, and so he is. Introduce him and leave us.

SCENE VIII.

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. Well, my fair princess, see thy wand'ring knight.

Urf. Welcome to London, Sir John; thou art indeed a wanderer.

Fal. A true knight-errant for thy sake.

Urf. For my sake, Sir John?

Fal. Aye, for thine, my Helen. Have I not encounter'd tremendous giants and fiery dragons, in the rebels of Northumberland and Wales? And then for magicians and enchanted castles: Owen Glendower and his Welch devils we put to the rout; and many a strong hold between here and West Chester have I visited, releasing fair damsels and distressed squires from captivity. I brought two of the latter up to town; I would they were safely immur'd in the country again.

Urf. And all these exploits for me, Sir John!

Fal. As I am a true knight, to lay my laurels at thy feet.

Urf. Do you then still love me in sincerity, Sir John?

Fal. Do I love thee? Am I a soldier? Have I courage? Love thee! I will be thy Troilus, and thou shalt be my Cressida.

Urf. You have long told me so, indeed.

Fal. And can I lye? Thou shalt be sole possessor of my person and wealth. Thou shalt share in the honours done me at the court of the new king. Thou shalt—but what shalt thou not do? We will be married incontinently.

Urf. O, Sir John, you know your own power, and our sex's weakness: but indeed for decency I cannot so speedily consent. Besides, Sir John, I am not yet put into possession of my estate and monies.

Fal. Nay then, as thou say'st, love, for decency's sake, we must bear with a short delay: but I will no longer be kept out of possession than thou art.

Urf. You shall not, Sir John; and, in the mean time, our lawyers shall confer on the terms of our marriage.

Fal. I hate lawyers. Let a priest suffice. Am not I a man of honour?

To do thee less than justice were a sin;
Give me thy lips, we'll settle all within.



ACT IV.

SCENE I. A Chamber.

Enter Justice Shallow and Mrs. Quickly, dressed in tawdry Cloaths.

Quick. **N**AY, forsooth, Mr. Shallow, I am too young a widow; much too young to think of a second husband.

Sbal. Not so, fair mistress. If to wed be good, the sooner married still the better sped. My affiduities will make you sooner forget your former spouse.

Quick. Your acidities, indeed, are very great, Mr. Shallow. But you are too pressing: I cannot so soon forget poor Quickly.—What the gowjeres have I said!

Sbal. Quickly!—I thought your husband's name was—

Quick. Yes, yes, and so it was; but I called him always Quickly, because he was ever so slow. He died, poor man, of a slow melancholy. Always asleep! night and day asleep.

Sbal. Hah! addicted to somnolency.

Quick. Aye, so the doctors said. He died of a solemnity; and a solemn end, I warrant ye, he made of it.

Sbal. He was too fat and corpulent perhaps; I am leaner.

Quick. Yes, Sir, he grew fat and burnd, sotting with his guests, instead of minding main chance and scoring double.

Sbal. Say you? Mistress!—

Quick. Blisters on my nimble tongue! [A] I say, Mr. Shallow, he was rich, and keeping a house, had store of guests, that made a world of trouble.

Sbal. Open house, and leave so much behind him: that is rare! he traded greatly!

Quick. Greatly, Mr. Shallow.

Sbal. And bore arms.

Quick. Two pumpions on a cucumber bed.

Sbal. They will quarter.—I'll settle on thee fairly, widow.

Quick. Will you, Mr. Shallow?

Sbal. Ecod, I will. Aye, twice as much for another smile. Odds heart, that took shot through me like an arrow. Nay, I will kiss thee, fack will I—

[*They struggle; Shallow kisses her, and breaks from him in affected anger.*]

Odds bobs! a dainty widow!

Quick. You're rude, Sir, I must leave you.

Sbal. Hah! gone!—then Shallow shall not be behind,

But will pursue and force her to be kind.

SCENE II.

Enter Mr. Slender and Dol Tearsheet.

Slender sings,

Slender and tender,

And no mere pretender.

Ha! said I well, Mrs. Beatrice?

Dol. Aye, and sung well too, Sir.

Slender. Nay, I have a sweet breath to sing what's the truth of it. And yet I warrant you not know I could sing so well, when you first fell love with me.

Dol. Oh, fy, Mr. Slender. You make me blush. Young maidens should not be told so, tho' it were true. But, pray, where learnt you now that I in love with you? Who told you this?

Slender. Marry, that did my uncle Shallow's fencing-master, the Don with the hard name. I should otherwise have blush'd more by half than you. Hang me if you had caught me at falling in love first. But one good turn deserves another, as I say in the country.

Dol. To be sure, Mr. Slender hath parts.

Slender. Marry, would I might be hanged for why, do you know, that I have had maidens love with me twice and once before now.

Dol. In the country belike.

Slender. Yea, verily, there was Mrs. Anne Page of Windsor, would have given, I warrant ye, more than I wot of, to be married to me.

Dol. And you would not have her.

Slender. Yes, I would have had her then; but I know not how, they cozened me, and married me to a great lubberly boy.

Dol. To a boy!

Slender. Yes, la! but, for that trick, if ever I marry any body again, I'll take care they do wear doe-skin breeches under their petticoats; I will.

Dol. Ha! ha! ha!

Slender. Nay, it was no such laughing matter I know of.

Dol. Ha! ha! ha!

Slender. Ecod, if you laugh so at me, handsome you are, I'll go and tell my uncle; so I will.

Dol. Go thy way, with God's blessing,

FALSTAFF'S WEDDING.

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were it not for thy wealth, Dol Tearsheet
not follow thee. [Exit.]

SCENE III. *Tavern in Eastcheap.*

Enter Falstaff, laughing.

Don Anticho del Pistolol what a bombast rogue
I knew his hand-writing, the moment I saw
But I have put a spoke into the wheel of his
privance. Dame Ursula and her maid have given
of rascals encouragement. If they bite, the
mirels will be hooked.

Enter Francis,

Sir John, here is the hobbling friar, that
been so often to ask for you. Shall I say you
at home?

Fal. Aye, let him in.—What can the gouty
friar want with me?

SCENE IV.

Enter Friar.

Fri. Peace be with you. Sir John, God save

Fal. Thank thee good father. What is your
necessity's will.

Fri. I think thou dost not know me, Sir John.
I indeed many years since our personal inti-
macy; your way of life and mine—

Fal. Were something different, father, to be
and though I may have seen you before, it is
long since I have been at shrift, that I must crave
pardon if I have totally forgot you. And yet
reverence may be my ghostly father, for aught
now.

Fri. Fye, fye, Sir John, a man of your age and
city.

Fal. Hoh! if your business be to chide me, I
mine ears.

Fri. If you will not admit your wound to be
cured; how can you expect to be cured, Sir John.

Fal. Cur'd! 'thlood! I took thee for a priest,
I find thou art a surgeon.

Fri. A spiritual one, Sir John; and such as
disorder requires.

Fal. Dost thou know my case then? A spiritual
man sayst thou? I am not given over by the
angels bodily yet. Who call in the divine till
I have sent out the doctor?

Fri. I know your case well, Sir John. It is
less your body than your mind that is af-
fected.

Fal. Nay, like enough. I have indeed been
nearly dispirited ever since the king's corona-
tion. A confounded melancholy hangs upon me
as a quotidian ague.

Fri. It is that melancholy, and the cause of it,
Sir John, I would remove.

Fal. And how wouldst thou remove it? By pro-
viding me with a charge of horse, and restoring me
the king's favour. I know no other way.

Fri. By inducing thee to repent, and be restor'd
the favour of the King of kings; which thou
forfeited by a dissolute and abandoned life.
Dost thou not think thou art in a state of repro-
bation?

Fal. Pray, Friar, by what authority dost thou
upon thee to catechise me? Dost thou come
of mere charity, or art thou employed by thy
superiors?

Fri. Suppose the former, Sir John.

Fal. Suppose the former, father Friar, why then
the devil is so strong in me, that I should be tempt-
ed to throw thee headlong down stairs for thy cha-
rity's impertinence.

Fri. Thy ill-manners, Sir John, would be inex-
cusable, were it not to be supposed the consequence

of an habitual antipathy to every thing that is good.
But, I will not lay claim to greater merit than is
my due. I am come by order of my lord chief
justice; who is so much your friend as to interest
himself in your reformation.

Fal. My lord chief justice! that's another mat-
ter. I cry thee mercy, reverend father. I find
thou'rt not the man I took thee for. Your reve-
rence does me honour; and I profess I am much
indebted to his lordship's kind love and regard to
my foul's health.

Fri. You'll hear me then, Sir John.

Fal. Yea, Heav'n forbid I should not—what
I said was meant against those officious zealots, who
are so forward to pry into men's consciences that will
not bear the looking into.

Fri. Sir John, we know your failings; and shall
not put you to the trouble of auricular confession at
present.

Fal. There, Friar, thou winn'st my heart.
Come sit thee down. Wilt drink a glass of sack?

Fri. I never do, Sir John.

Fal. I cry thee mercy, then. Here is to your
reverence's health; and now, I'll tell thee what—
I do protest, I sit me now upon the stool of repent-
ance, and have been honestly deliberating, some
time past, to change my course of life. I am heart-
ily tir'd of it. Indeed, I am, good father.

Fri. I am glad to find thee in such promising
dispositions, and think thou couldst not do better
than to betake thyself, agreeable to his lordship's
intentions, to some monastery, where thou wilt be
secluded from temptations, and have all spiritual
assistance to encourage thee to mortify the desires
of the flesh.

Fal. Hold thee there, good father. Let me un-
derstand thee. What! would his lordship make a
monk of me! I must there beg his pardon. A
monk; and to mortify the flesh! For Heaven's
sake, good father, consider what a mortification
indeed that must be to me, who have six times the
quantity of any other man. If I must be included
within the pale of the church, why not make a
canon of me (not indeed a minor canon) but a pre-
bendary, or a bishop, now. Something might be
said for either of these. But for a monk! I know
not any thing I am less fit for; unless indeed his
lordship had meant to make a running footman of
me.

Fri. Nay, Sir John, his lordship will not use
compulsion in this. He will not so far lay a re-
straint on your inclinations.

Fal. O, if ever I find myself that way inclin'd;
his lordship may depend on it I shall be as ready as
ever to follow my inclinations. But the lesson of
lean and fallow abstinence is very long and hard,
good father; I am not gotten half-way through the
first chapter yet.

Fri. Some steps, however, Sir John, you must
take toward a more reputable way of life; and that
speedily too; otherwise you will be strip of the
honours of knighthood; and the king's sentence
of banishment will be strictly put in execution against
you.

Fal. As to the matter of knighthood; once a
knight and always a knight, you know. The
king may make as many knights as he pleases; but
he will not so easily unmake them again. My title
will not depend on the king's courtesy, but on that
of my followers. I am, notwithstanding, very desirous
to give his lordship satisfaction; and so assure
thee, on the honour of a soldier, of the sincer-
ity of my repentance.

Fri. And yet this may be only a transitory fit of penitence, owing to your late disappointment. What reason canst thou give me to hope this state of mind will continue?

Fal. Why, father, what I am shortly going to do is an act, that has confin'd many a man to a state of repentance, which has continued to the last hour of his life.

Fri. This, Sir John, is saying something. Pray what are you going to do?

Fal. I have taken a resolution, father, to— What dost thou think now it is I have resolv'd upon?

Fri. Some commendable act of penance, no doubt.

Fal. Nay, it may well be call'd so, I believe. I am determin'd, good father, to marry.

Fri. Call you that an act of penance, Sir John? Is marriage a state of mortification?

Fal. I wish I may not find it so.

Fri. Well, Sir John, marriage is a holy state; and in some degree I approve your resolution; but in the estimation of the church, it is also an holy act, and ought not to be enter'd into unadvisedly. Your repentance should precede your receiving the benefit of that sacrament.

Fal. O, doubt not but I shall repent me sufficiently afterwards.

Fri. Ah! Sir John, Sir John, I fear me you are no true penitent: but, however, it may be lawful to save what cannot be effectually cured. I did not expect to make a convert at the first interview. If thou takest any measures that tend towards reformation, thou shalt have my prayers and best assistance therein. Another time I will hold farther conversation with thee.

Fal. In the mean time, good father, let me stand fair in your report to my lord chief justice and his majesty.

Fri. Thou shalt stand fairer than I fear thou deservest. Farewell. *[Exit Friar.]*

SCENE V. Tavern continued.

Falstaff solus.

Fal. Fare thee well, good father Friar. What an hypocritical puritan? Would not drink sack! Not with the ungodly, I suppose. But I am damnably mistaken, if he be not indebted for that rosy countenance and the gout, to the penetrating qualities of old herries.

SCENE VI.

Enter Bardolph.

Fal. Well, Bardolph, what news dost thou bring?

Bar. Marry, Sir John, I have just seen a fight that you would have chuckled at.

Fal. And what is that?

Bar. Why, Mother Quickly and Dol Tearsheet, attired like dames of fashion, and courted by Justice Shallow and Master Slender. For my own part, I'm out of the plot; but I find the contrivance is deep: the squires are caught. Pistol and Nym are somehow at the bottom of it. That's all I can learn.

Fal. Bardolph, those knaves would leave me, and set up for themselves. The squires are mine; a lawful prey, and shall not be fed upon without our leave. Learn more, and I will bethink me how to counteract the villainous machinations of these runagates. But, now, attend me forth. *[Exit.]*

SCENE VII.

Enter Ursula and Bridget.

Urs. Now, Bridget, mark me well. That errant Oar Spanish suitors will anon be here. *[Knave,*

Sir John requests that I do greet him kindly, And give him flattering earnest of success.

Brid. Doubt not my cunning: I've been there while to set an egg upon it's little end.

Urs. A grannum's secret, Bridget; but no more. What creature's that, who with enormous strides Measures the pavement yonder?

Brid. 'Tis the Don—I will be ready, Madam when you please, to scare him hence. *[Exit Brid.]*

Urs. Nay, he shall have some four as well. Keen as he is, all honey is not meet. *[Swe.]*

SCENE VIII.

Enter Pistol.

Pis. Fair dame, I kiss your hands, your grace brief,

Borne by the winged Mercury, came to hand; And sends your slave to meet his amorous doom.

Urs. I fear, Sir, I have trespass'd on the bound Of maiden modesty, to write so freely.

What will the world say of this strange demeanour? *Pis.* Breathes he the vital air will dare to call Reflections base on Ursula's fair name?

Urs. Indeed, Signior Anticho, I have a womanly timidity, and am apprehensive my behaviour in particular will seem too light. Affections of speedy growth are blam'd, as weeds too rank thrive in true love's garden.

Pis. No general rule's without exception, lady. The object of your choice—Pistol's fame Will silence all that hear and know his name.

Urs. In that indeed I place my confidence: yet a stranger, till his worth's approved, how noble in his native soil, is open to suspicion. That your valour, birth, or virtuous fame I mean question; but to please my phantasy, and justify conduct to the world, I would know more of your high rank and pedigree. What is the blazon of it's distinction?

Pis. Pistol wears his coat upon his sword. Behold this blade.—The very steel is dy'd

[Drum.] With blood of Infidels, Jews, Turks, and Moors.

Urs. It hath a scurvy coat upon't indeed.

Pis. True, lady, this no burnish'd Finsbury blade Taken by young cutlers from their stock in trade And in Moorfields on holidays display'd.— A soldier's weapon this, that bravely fell In Palestine on Saracens pell-mell.

The gift of that renowned and peerless paragon Rhodomentado hight, the king of Arragon.

Urs. And hath Pistol's valour then been found In Palestine? That merit's great, I own.

Pis. There by this sword so many foes were slain That it was called the flaming sword of Spain. *[Putting up his sword.]*

Urs. Indeed! 'Twere much a warrior to whom Who comes victorious from the Holy Land. *[Exit.]*

SCENE IX.

Enter Bridget in a Hurry.

Brid. Good gracious! Madam! Sir John has

Pis. Ha! who? who? what's that? *Fal.* Didst thou say?

Urs. No matter, Sir, you shall not hence again. It is a quondam sweetheart; whom for thee, I shall dismiss with frowns, as thou shalt see.

Brid. Heavens, Madam! I would not for world Sir John should come in while the cavalier here. We should have bloody doings I warrant. Did not the knight, when he was here last, plain of your indifference, and vow vengeance on your new lover?

[*Aside.*] By Styx, he'll know and foil me.
Poh! poh! this gentleman fears him not,
twenty such. Don Pistol's sword hath been
among the moors.

Moor! lack-a-day! what talk you of
What are simple moors to such a paramour
You know, Madam, he is desperation at
loss of your ladyship's affection.

Thou Mistress Abigail, art in the right—

pretensions if the knight doth boast,

happy man be's dole, say I,

primo venuto il primo servito.

How's this, signior? Shall not a woman
my age and fashion make my own choice? And
your honour thus desert your fortune.

Desert my fortune! ha! why—what—O,

Nay, nay, I claim protection from your
sinist this rude intruder.

[*Sword*]
Furies — [*Pauses.*] Oh! I have it.—

—thou sayst — my sword thou shalt com-
paign pagan recreant or Christian knight. [*mand*
forth, Toledo — [*Draws.*] Ha! what's this
blunder vile! unfortunate mistake! [*I see?*

warlet hath equipp'd me with a foil,

blunt and batter'd foil, fans point and temper:

would not parry ev'n a bulrush; this!

[*Throws away his sword, which Bridget picks up.*

Bridget, let's see —

[*Takes the sword, and clapping the point to the*

ground, bends it double.

Alas! 'tis fo, 'tis plain.

ha, ha, the flaming sword of Spain!

gift of that renown'd and peerless paragon

domontado hight, the King of Arragon!

[*Holding it up in derision.*

turning to Pistol.]

do not take my humour thus amiss,

light of heart; but nothing mean t'offend.—

with this paultry foil thou can'st not fight,

self will with't encounter this same knight.

get will safe conduct thee to the gate.

and good tidings speedily await. [*Exit Urfula.*

SCENE X.

Pistol looking after her.

gibbet be my portion, if I trow,

ether she means to jilt me now, or no;

fata trabunt—Abigail, lead on,

Falstaff's near, 'tis time that I were gone.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XI. A Street.

Enter Justice Shallow and Master Slender.

Shal. Take me—take me this letter, I say, to

John Falstaff.—That is his suttl'ing-house. I

maul his cloak-bag of chitterlings with my

er, as I may.

And will you fight him, cousin? Well,

me if I carry the challenge. I never could

the thoughts of cold iron. Even a key put

my back for a bloody nose, ugh—ugh—ugh,

old always set me a shuddering.

Shal. Don't tell me—if the law will not get me

money, I'll be reveng'd of him. The tun-

knave shall not make such a fool of me. I

have his blood or my money.

His blood! O lud! O lud! Why, cousin

allow you are enough to —

Shal. Carry me this letter, I say, to Sir John

Shal. What is it to you? If I am kill'd, you

my heir, and come in for my land and beaves.

do as I bid you.

Shal. Ecod, that's true. I did not think of

if my cousin's kill'd, I come in for his

estate. [*Aside.*] Aye, I'll carry him the challenge.
Hey! here he comes, with his bottle-nos'd man,
that pick'd my pocket at Windsor.

SCENE XII. Street continued.

Enter Falstaff and Bardolph.

Shal. Sir John! Sir John Falstaff!

Bar. Sir John, Justice Shallow calls ye.

Fal. What would the blade of spear-mint have
with me? I have done with him.

Shal. But I have not yet done with you, Sir
John? I would first have my thousand pound of
you again.

Fal. You would, Master Shallow! like enough!
You must take me then in the humour. I am at
present ill-dispos'd to your suit.

Shal. Tut, Sir John. I have said I will not
tamely put up this wrong. If I do, I shall be
flouted and jib'd to death: I shall be pursued by
the mockery of a whole hundred.

Fal. Not unlikely. But, believe me, the more
you bustle in this business, the more you will ex-
pose yourself. The more you stir—you know the
proverb, Master Shallow, it is a little homely, so
let that pass. Yet, let me advise thee; rest con-
tent.

Shal. Content? I am not content. I cannot be
content. Nay, I will not be content. Give me
back the money, or I will have satisfaction of thee.

Fal. Satisfaction, sayst thou? Why thou wilt
not dare me to the combat.

Shal. Such provocation would make a coward
fight, Sir John.

Fal. If it make thee fight, I'll be sworn it would:
for I have seen thee trembling at the shaking of a
wheat-ear.

Shal. To be bamboozled! cheated! laughed at!
I will not put it up. By Heav'n's I will not put
it up.

Fal. Well said, Master Shallow. Now I see
there's mettle in thee. But surely thou would'st
not be the first to break the peace! thou, whose
office it is to punish the breach of it.

Shal. Sir John, there are times and reasons for
all things. If you will neither give me my money
nor gentleman's satisfaction, I will have thee tosf'd
in a blanket for a postroom as thou art.

Fal. They must be stout carls, Master Shallow,
that tosf me in a blanket.

Shal. Well, well, we shall see—I'll parley with
you no longer. Cousin Slender, don't stand still I,
shall I, but give him the note.

Slender. Aye, aye, if coz is kill'd, I shall have his
estate; and so there's the challenge.

[*Exeunt Shallow and Slender.*

SCENE XIII.

Falstaff and Bardolph.

Fal. A challenge! — By the Lord and it is a
challenge. I am call'd upon here to meet him on
Tower-hill incontinently at single rapier. Heo!
what a turluru! In the same of common-sense is
the fool turn'd madman? What means the simple
tony by this? To get his money again? Does he
think by running me thro' the pericardium to be-
come my heir at law? The fearful stag is at bay,
and become desperate. But let me see—what's to
be done here? I am in person too much of a knight
to engage with so little a squire.—I have it.—
Bardolph, I being your master and a knight, thou
art by the laws of chivalry no less than a squire.
Now, as I take it, this quarrel is properly thine:
thou must meet Justice Shallow at single rapier.

Bar. I, Sir John! He has no quarrel against
me. The challenge is given to your honour.

Fal. True, but I tell thee my honour disdains to encounter a pitiful squire: thou must take my sword and fight him.

Bar. I shall only disgrace your arms, Sir John.

Fal. Go to, you will do well. He knows nothing of the sword; and should he challenge thee at pistols, put a charge into each barrel, and present thy nose at him: he will never stand thy fire.

Bar. Indeed, Sir John, I must be excus'd. I never could fight in my life, unless there was something to be got by it; a booty on the highway or so.

Fal. Why, 'tis for a thousand pound, you rogue.

Bar. And where's the money?

Fal. At my cashier's.

Bar. Well then, Sir John, why should we fight for it?

Fal. Bardolph, thou art a coward; but no matter. I have a thought: I will meet him myself. Go, fetch the buckler I fought with at Shrewsbury.



ACT V.

SCENE I. *Tower-hill.*

Enter Pistol and Justice Shallow, stripped for the Combat.

Pis. **D**READ nought, brave squire, the knight's a coward rank.

Shal. I am glad to hear that, and yet I would I had had a lesson or two more, before I had encounter'd him.

Pis. Bear thy point thus—*sa, sa*, friend Shallow, *sa*.

Do thus, I say, and trust Pistolo's art.

I to the buxom widow will relate

This deed of prowess.

Shal. I will essay; but some one comes this way; let us retire, and try that pass again.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Enter Dr. Caius and Man.

Cai. Jack Rugby, follow me, Jack Rugby: I have hear dere is to be duel fought hereabouts, by and bye. If de parties be not killed outright, dey may vant assistance. Ve must vach de opportunity, Jack Rugby.

Rug. To prevent the gentlemen fighting, Sir—

Cai. To prevent their fighting! vat ave we to do wid dat? No, you fool, Jack: to take care of de wounded. Dat is my business.

Rug. But how if the other should run away?

Cai. By gar let him run: he be no patient for me.—Come dis way.

SCENE III.

Enter Falstaff.

Aha—aha—What a vile mist there is abroad to-day! I cannot see a sword's length before me. This must be the spot. But where is the adversary? I would not have him, methinks, lost in the fog. Master Shallow! Master Shallow!

SCENE IV.

Re-enter Shallow.

Shal. Aye, aye, Sir John, here am I.

Fal. Saints and good angels guard us! What is this?

Shal. Come, Sir John, draw, draw.

Fal. It calls me by my name too! *Jesu Maria!* It is no *deceptio visus*. In the name of Heav'n and earth, what art thou? Ouphe, fairy, ghost, hobgoblin, or demon? *Exorcise te.—Pater noster—*

Shal. Come, Sir John, don't think to put from my purpose: you know me very well. You know Justice Shallow to his cost.

Fal. How! can this thing be Robert Shallow of Gloucestershire, Esquire, justice of the peace of the quorum? I took it for some strolling gheschap'd out of purgatory, by all that's terrible.

Shal. Sir John, this mockery shall not suffer you.

Fal. Nay, it is true, as I am a sinner.

Shal. Will you fight me, Sir John, or will you not?

Fal. Fight thee! When thou seest the prince eagle descend to encounter the tom-tit. When shall the lofty elephant wield his proboscis against a mite? Shall Sir John Falstaff draw his martial sword against such a pig-widgeon as thou?

Shal. What then did you come here for, Sir John? If you would not be treated as a coward, lay down your target and draw.

Fal. Lay down my target, say'st thou? Who would be fool then? Look ye, Master Shallow (since shallow thou wilt be) if I fight, it must be on equal terms. It is but equitable that my body should be secur'd, when I engage with an unsubstantial form; a thing that has none. Dost thou think me such a goose-cap as to lay open this round belly to the point of thy rapier, when the presentest not a mark for me. It were as good pricking at a lottery, ten thousand blanks to prize, to make a thrust at thee. It were indeed more than a miracle to hit what, rhetorical speaking, is impalpable. But come, if thou wilt fight with me, thou shalt not say I deal unfairly by thee. To draw my sword would be needless for hit thee I never shall. That's flat. Therefore toledo, rest thou in thy scabbard. This is a coward. *[Stands on his defence with his target.]* Canst thou point as thou wilt: if thou canst not come in me before thou art weary, the money is mine; if thou dost, and woundest me, I will then—keep to pay the surgeon. So, come on.

Shal. Sir John, you are a cowardly knave, and I will kill you if I can.

[They fight. Mr. Shallow thrusts at Sir John who receives his point always on his target.]

Fal. Well said, Master Shallow.—Bravo!—To again.—*Sa—sa.*

[Shallow breaks his sword, and Falstaff claps with him, and seizes him by the collar; which Shallow falls down on his knees, and Falstaff claps the target on his head.]

Ha! have I nabb'd you? You should have appointed sticklers, Mr. Shallow. What if I cut thy throat now?

[Taking off the target.] *Shal.* Sir John, my life is in your hands: you know you have wrong'd me.

Fal. Well then, thy wrongs be forgotten; and on that condition, I give thee back thy forfeited life.

Shal. And I hope also you won't bear malice to Sir John, against me for the future.

Fal. By the Lord, not I. I do admire thy magnanimity and valour. Why, thou art the very mirror of prowess, and pink of squire errand. John of Gaunt was a fool to thee. Were I a knight, thou shouldst, for this day's work, be made a knight with all the honours of chivalry. Nay, by the Lady, I will take majesty upon me, and knight myself. Rise up Sir Robert Shallow, knight of the most horrible order of combatants and murderers of the fifth button. And now, Sir Robert, if thou dost not think the title I've bestow'd

FALSTAFF'S WEDDING.

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thee worth the thousand pound I owe thee, I will for the first time make restitution. Thou shalt be repaid out of my wife's portion. For thou must know I am this night to be married, and have broke into the round sum to make handsome preparations for my nuptials.

Shal. I give thee joy, Sir John; and as I find there is still so much honour in thee, I will open my heart, and confes to thee, that both my nephew Slender and I are going to be married too.

Fal. Aye! to whom, Master Shallow, to whom?

Shal. I to the wealthy widow of Watling-street, and my nephew Slender, to buxom Beatrice her niece, of Bucklersbury.

Fal. Master Shallow, you are deceiv'd, Master Shallow. I will be a friend to thee. The widow and her niece are impostors.

Shal. Impostors!

Fal. Whores! whores, Master Shallow!

Shal. How, the widow of Watling-street, and Mrs. Beatrice of Bucklersbury—

Fal. Go to, I mean thy widow— Give me thy hand; I will tell thee more as we pass along.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

Enter Dr. Caius, and his Man.

Caius. Dey shake hands!—Eh, morbleu; dey be brace of cowards. Dat fat knight never once saw his rapier. By gar did we not get more by de madie de France, dan by de English courage, we should not get salt to our pottage, pardie. But, by my troth, I will charge them both for my attendance; and if they no pay me, I will expose their no courage.—Come along, Jack Rugby.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

Enter Pistol.

Pis. The train takes fire, and all will soon be flame.

The squires are gull'd; and Dol and Quickly take madames of wealth. The corporal plotted well.

Enter Nym, who gives Pistol a Letter.

Nym. A letter from Madam Ursula; see if there's amour in it.

Pis. Ha! prize or blank! I'll open it, and read my fortune in the lottery-book of fate.

[*Pistol reads to himself.*]

Love's bright welkin, 'tis a golden prize.

might could withstand the flash of pistol's prime.

he writes us here she scorns the wassel knight,

who keeps to-day high revels at the globe:

here if we meet we may in masquerade

be sped; I to the mistress, you the maid.

Nym. Marry-trap, the humour is good; but how do we know them?

Pis. In purple garb, like nymphs, they'll be array'd;

and in feign'd voices speak: the word is *job*!

us about our own disguises straight:

making outwits, and courage conquers, fate.

SCENE VII. A Ball-room.

Enter Falstaff, with Shallow and Slender in Dominos; their Masks in their Hands.

Shal. Marry, Sir John, thou hast a pithy periphrasis; this is a notable contrivance. I have appointed the parties as you directed to be dressed in black, and to meet us among the revellers here at the globe.

Fal. Thou hast done well, Master Shallow; and you and your nephew are clothed in the same disguises as Nym and Pistol.—You shall see sport, Master Shallow. But see, the maskers come this way. I must go meet the bride.

[*Shallow and Slender put on their masks.*]

Enter a Number of Maskers; among the rest Pistol, Nym, Mrs. Quickly and Doll.

Re-enter Falstaff, leading in Ursula, followed by Bridget.

Fal. Gentles, you're welcome.—You see I come unmask'd among you. It were superfluous for him to hide his face who could not be concealed for his belly. Could I mask that indeed, I might pass in disguise. But come, begin the dance: I hope there will be yet concealment enough in this revelry to defeat the rogueries contrived in darkness, and bring them to light.

Pis. [To Nym.] Nym, who are those in purple vestments clad?

Nym. The two in green?

Pis. In robes of Tyrian dye.

Nym. By their garb they should be the parties; let us accost them. The priest is ready without. We will be speedy; and, when sped, return unmask'd to tantalize the knight.

[*They go up to Quickly and Dol, and take them out.*]

A DANCE.

Pistol and Nym re-enter unmasked.

Fal. Pistol, how now? wherefore hast doff'd thy mask?

Art thou the master of this feast? or am I thine?

Pis. That is as fortune bids, and time shall shew, Smeo mount aloft, while others truckle low.

Sir knight, no more your ancient and base tyke,

Pistol was born to wield the potent pike.

Fal. Pistol, thou art always in the clouds. Art thou drunk? or hast thou got a commission?

Pis. Gold honour buys, and Ursula hath store.

Fal. How, rascal! dost thou mean to rob my wife?

Nym. Thy wife! marry that were a good jest.—I see the humour runs well.

Pis. Not thine, but mine; proud Basilisco knight? Without, just married, waits thy quondam flame.

Fal. To thee?

Pis. To me.

Fal. Nym, What sayst thou?

Nym. Marry, Sir John, that's the short of it: and I myself was just now married to Mrs. Bridget her woman.

Fal. [Turning to Ursula.] Say, my fair queen of Sheba, is this true? nay, gentles, all unmask, that we may see what faces are put on.

Urs. You, Sir John, can answer for me.

Brid. And you for me, Madam. Marry a corporal indeed! the fellows are drunk.

[*Pistol and Nym look at each other with confusion and astonishment; during which time Mrs. Quickly and Dol Tearsheet enter unmasked, and, passing by Pistol and Nym, (who start back with fresh astonishment) go up to Justice Shallow and Master Slender.*]

Fal. How, now, you bare-fac'd strumpets! what do you mean? This is no brothel: play no gambols here.

Quick. Marry come up, Sir John; you will not hinder my going to my husband. Mr. Shallow will protect me; my dear Mr. Shallow.

Dol. No, nor me neither, were he twenty Sir John Falstaffs. Sweet Mr. Slender.

Shal. Goody Quickly, loose your hold I pray you; I know you, Mrs. Quickly.

Slen. Aye, and I know you too, Mrs. Dorothy.

Dol. O ho! do you so? What, Sir John hath blown us; hath he? But no matter; he cannot unmarry us.

Quick. No, truly, that he can't.

Fal. Nor would I: for since whores and rogues have consorted, I have never seen four better matched.

Quick. I to wife Justice Shallow.

Dol. And I to foolish Mr. Slender.

Shal. Not so, hostess; keep your distance, I pray you.

Slen. No, no, keep off, Dol, keep off.

Quick. Plain Dol! do you hear that, Mrs. Slender?

Dol. And hostess, truly! do you take that, Mrs. Shallow?

Fal. Away—ye termagant jades; or I will demolish your frippery.—There are your cuckolds. Pistol, Nym, why stand ye there like mutes? Are you fascinated at the success of your mummery? Or are you ruminating on the comforts of cuckoldom by anticipation.—Take hence your crooked ribs.

[Pistol and Nym go and take Quickly and Dol by the hand.]

Quick. What, has there been a trick, then, played on us in these disguises? Was I married to you, Pistol?

Pis. Dame Quickly, thou art mine. The fates have cross'd us.

Fal. Nay, I'll be sworn they have joined you.

Dol. And was I married to you, Nym?

Nym. Even so, Dol. I am heartily sorry for it; but luck hath turn'd tail upon us, that's the trick on't.

Dol. A very scurvy trick, indeed; but I had so

many husbands before, that one more or less breaks no squares with Dol. Come, Mrs. Quickly, be a good cheer. Pistol is better than nobody: he will protect thee, by outswagging the swaggers.

Pis. Contented I, since so the Fates decree, Soldier no more, a victualler I'll be;

The martial sword exchange for carving knife, And cut out viands for the means of life.

No more in anger fight, but joyous dine, And 'stead of drawing blood, draw sparkling wine;

Nay, should Sir John himself my service lack, At the Boar's Head, he'll find a glass of sack.

Fal. But wilt thou put no lime in it, Pistol?

Pis. No, by Falernian Bacchus, for my knight.

Fal. Then will I be thy guest. Nay, by'r lady, thou shalt for once be mine too. I will not break off the thread of our quondam familiarity with a little grace as majesty hath done. I do invite you all, therefore, to supper with me. And if you cannot laugh over the success of your own contrivances, be merry on the consummation of my nuptials.

Come, spouse, tho' long indeed hath been our courting,

We're not quite past the days of love and sporting

'Tis true, a younger bridegroom had you sped,

He might have been less prone to sleep in bed;

Yet ev'n in autumn, some spring flowers may grow,

As there are lilies in September blow:

Youth's wild oats sown, 'tis ne'er too late to mow

The worst once past, the better is the end.

EPILOGUE.

THE Muse of Shakespeare's compliments!—A card
To excuse this evening's enterprising bard!

Great his presumption, to confess the truth;
But, as he pleads the passion of his youth,
Together with the magic of her charms,
Attracting him resistless to her arms;
Tho' somewhat by surprise, she owns, she suffer'd,
Yet, as no actual violence was offer'd,
She's willing, if the audience should agree,
For this one time to set th' offender free.
We women soon forgive, if not forget,
The crimes our beauties make the men commit;
Especially when once we're past our prime,
And Shakespeare's Muse, like me, 's the worse for time.
For, tho' she charm with fancy ever young,
Tho' heav'nly musick dwell upon her tongue,
Lo! many an artless smile and dimple sleek,
Which sat alluring on her virgin cheek;
Beauties, that faded on the gazer's eye,
And no cold-cream of comment can supply.

As for what Mercury in the Prologue told ye;
Pray, let not that from clemency withhold ye.
That Hermes was of old a lying blode,
And practis'd in imposture, as his trade;
The patron be, or classic love deceives,
Of cheats, forebidders, bigglers, bursters, thieves.

Besides—to tell you a stage-trick of ours—
But you'll not spread the secret out of doors—
The man was no more Mercury, than I am
Queen Hecuba, the wife of Trojan Priam.
A messenger from Phœbus! He a god!
I can assure you all, 'Twas Mr. Dodd:
His dropping from the clouds, was all a sham;
And his pretended brand was puff-blown.

We've beathen gods of paste-board, made to fly
On bempen cords across the painted sky;
Those canvas clouds, that dangle there above,
Inveloping the throne itself of Jove!

His tale fictitious too, tho' told so glib;
For take it on my word, 'twas all a fib.
Old Falstaff in Elysium!—To my thinking,
So great his natural tendency to sinking,
That to the shades if he had once descended,
To bring him back, not Atlas had pretended.
Dramatick sprites (at least they tell me so)
Dwell not with saints above, nor devils below:
But, form'd th' imagination to engage,
During their short-liv'd passage o'er the stage,
As mere ideal characters exist,

And stand as cyphers mark'd on Nature's list;
To genius given a delegated power
To form these transient beings of an hour;
Which, from this mimic world, whenever they go,
Are free to range in fancy's pinnacles:
A limbo large and broad; which in the schools
Is call'd by some the Paradise of Fools.
Fæta naturæ THERE, their preservation
Is purchas'd by no game association:
The poaching plagiarist alone denied
A privilege, granted to each bard beside;
We've, tho' a cottager, to try his skill,
May shoot, or curse, or hunt them down at will;
In his own paddock may the stray's receiver,
And scorn to ask a lordly owner's leave.

Not that but here, the author of the play,
By me begs leave submissively to say,
"None more than he deserves great Shakespeare's
name,
"Or glows with zeal to vindicate his fame."